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MACAULAY;

THE

HISTORIAN, STATESMAN, AND ESSAYIST.

MACAULAY;

THE

HISTORIAN, STATESMAN, AND ESSAYIST.

Anecdotes

OF HIS

LIFE AND LITERARY LABOURS,

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS

EARLY AND UNKNOWN WRITINGS.

SECOND EDITION.

Library of Congress
1837

City of Washington

London:

JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN, PICCADILLY.

—
1860.

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LONDON :
PRINTED BY TAYLOR AND GREENING, GRAYSTOKE-PLACE,
FETTER-LANE, E.C.

PREFACE.

THE present *brochure* professes to be nothing more than a sketch of the life of the late Lord Macaulay. On the sudden departure of a great and worthy man from amongst us, the public are naturally desirous of learning immediately the prominent events in his life, and of hearing any anecdotes, scraps of conversation, or opinions, which may have been treasured up. The compiler has ever been an admirer of the deceased Peer, and dates his admiration from the reading, for the first time, his delightful Essays, whilst steaming down the Mississippi. The brilliancy

of the style, heightened by the scenery on the journey, made the book the most charming reading in the world.

These Essays, universally acknowledged the most delightful reading in the whole range of English literature, may be purchased of the Messrs. Longmans for a few shillings. Get them, reader, if you have them not already, and I guarantee you the finest intellectual repast you ever sat down to.

Kensington, January 11, 1860.

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MACAULAY,

THE
HISTORIAN, STATESMAN, AND ESSAYIST:
ANECDOTES OF HIS LIFE AND TIMES.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

GREAT MEN LATELY DECEASED.—MACAULAY.—HIS ILLNESS.—
HIS DEATH.

A CENTURY hence, the literary student, seeking to know why the great *History of England*, begun in the reign of Queen Victoria, never advanced beyond the fourth volume, will, upon turning over what may then probably be a musty file of the *Times* newspaper, learn the reason from such an obituary announcement as this:—

MACAULAY.—On the 28th inst., at his residence, Holly Lodge, Campden Hill, the Right Honourable Lord Macaulay, aged 59.

The Historian is gone, and the History which was to have “placed before the English of the nine-

teenth century a true picture of the life of their ancestors" is left unfinished—a melancholy memorial of the splendid power, and at the same time the puny weakness, of man.

The year which has just closed has exacted a mighty toll from mankind, and in future will acquire a mournful renown from the number of eminent workers in almost every department of intellectual labour who have, since its commencement, been carried to the grave. Science has mourned over an irreparable loss in the death of Humboldt, though scarcely daring to repine at the fiat which released the grand old man from the cares of life, after a career prolonged far beyond the average span of human existence, yet infinitely less remarkable for its duration than for the priceless value of its fruits. Engineering has been called upon to pay a tribute of respect to the graves of two of its most illustrious ornaments, each called away in the hour of his highest success. Poetry has wept over the tomb of Leigh Hunt, equally endeared to us by the genial spirit which breathed through the emanations of his

playful fancy, and by the sturdy love of liberty which made him offer himself as a willing martyr in the cause of free thought and speech." Philosophy and Criticism have already missed the powerful and brilliant pen of De Quincey,—the master of English prose." Fiction has bewailed the stroke which deprived her of Washington Irving, though her regrets were softened by the knowledge that he sank to his rest with a tranquillity which seemed an appropriate close to a life devoted to the embodiment of so many gentle and humanising creations. And History has scarcely recovered from the first pang of poignant sorrow at the death of Hallam and Prescott, two of the most eminent of her modern apostles, when she is aroused to new grief by the decease of Lord Macaulay, suddenly snatched away in the full vigour of his intellectual power, and vanishing from the living world with the last shadows of the fading year." The death of the great man has fallen like a thunderbolt amongst us. Indeed, it was but the other day that we were given to understand in the public journals, that two more volumes of the world-wide History were

completed, and would pass from the press during the coming literary season. Already had speculation hinted at the period down to which the fresh instalment would bring us in these splendid annals. Conjectures had been formed as to the characters that would be drawn, and the scenes that would be depicted in the reigns of Queen Anne and the first George. Politicians had made up their minds for fresh chapters in the history of parties, and critics were mending their pens for earnest work, when on the eve of a new year we learn that death has passed over our city, and snatched one of the great minds from amongst us.

For many years, it is pretty generally known, Lord Macaulay's health has not been good. Various causes have been assigned as the reason —his residence in India, which somewhat impaired a previously vigorous digestion, and brought on biliary symptoms; his sedentary habits and close application to literature, varied improperly only by public and political meetings, and dinners at the houses of the great, where his vast mind poured forth rich conversational streams for hours together, but which proved, unfortunately, rather an

excitement than a salutary change. These extremes of living, the shining in brilliant company, and the silent seclusion of the past-searching student, it is supposed gradually induced a complaint of the heart, the circulation of which for many years had been extremely languid, but which manifested no serious organic derangement until the year 1852, when his lordship experienced a painful illness, from the effects of which he never entirely recovered.

It was about this period that he removed his residence from the Albany, where he had previously resided for many years, to Campden Hill, Kensington. The great house in Piccadilly will for ever be associated with the deceased Lord. Here a large portion of the first instalment of his History was written; and here Jeffrey returned the proof-sheets after he had kindly corrected and punctuated them. The reader will, perhaps, recollect, in connection with this removal, the idle reports circulated in some newspapers at the time, one of which stated that Piccadilly was too noisy for the great Historian to pursue successfully his literary labours; and

another, that the change was for the purpose of placing the Prince of Wales under his distinguished tutorage. To Holly Lodge, however, he actually removed for health and repose; and there, until the day of his departure from amongst us, he has mainly resided. His health, I should remark, by this change, continued tolerably good up to within a fortnight ago, when he had a second attack, from which, however, he rallied to such an extent that his medical men ceased to apprehend danger. He continued to improve; and when Mr. T. F. Ellis, the Recorder of Leeds, who was a warm friend of the deceased noble lord, and one of his lordship's executors, saw him on Friday, 23rd ult., he looked as well as usual; and at the Christmas party on the following Monday, at which his lordship entertained the various members of his family, he was only so far unlike himself as to be rather silent. As the *Times* remarks:—"If Sydney Smith had been there then he would not have had to complain, as he once did, that he longed for some 'brilliant flashes of silence.'"
Diseases of the heart, however, are peculiarly deceptive. The friends, in departing from Kensington that

night, little thought that in less than forty-eight hours their great and noble entertainer would be no more for this world. A relapse seems subsequently to have taken place, and on Wednesday evening, about eight o'clock, he died in a fainting fit, without the least pain. Lord Macaulay was never married, and the title he had so well won consequently dies with him.

CHAPTER II.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.—HIS BIRTH.—ACCOUNT OF THE MACAULAY FAMILY.—THE FAMILY STURDY CALVINISTS.—ZACHARY MACAULAY.—WILBERFORCE.—LETTER FROM WILBERFORCE.—ZACHARY MACAULAY AN ABOLITIONIST.—ANECDOTE OF ROGERS.—ZACHARY MACAULAY'S FAMILY.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY was born on the 25th of October, 1800, at Rothley Temple, in Leicestershire. The family originally belonged to the Highlands of Scotland, where the Rev. John Macaulay, M.A., grandfather to the Historian, was a Presbyterian minister of the Kirk at Inverary. The brother of this worthy of the Scotch Church was the Rev. Kenneth Macaulay, the celebrated missionary to the Hebrides, from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge. He wrote the "*History of St. Kilda, containing a description of this remarkable island, the manners and customs of the inhabitants, the religious and pagan antiquities found there; with many other curious and interesting particulars,* 1764."

Dr. Johnson, in his “Tour to the Hebrides,” thus speaks of him :—

“ At Nairn we may fix the verge of the Highlands, for here I first saw peat fires, and first heard the Erse language. We had no motive to stay longer than to breakfast, and went forward to the house of Mr. Macaulay, the minister who published an account of St. Kilda, and by his direction visited Calder Castle, from which Macbeth drew his second title. It has been formerly a place of great strength. The drawbridge is still to be seen, but the moat is now dry. The tower is very ancient. Its walls are of great thickness, arched on the top with stone, and surrounded with battlements. The rest of the house is later, though far from modern.”

Zachary Macaulay, the son of the Reverend John, and the father of the noble Lord, the subject of this memoir, quitted the north of Scotland in early youth, to pursue a mercantile life in the south. From the rigorous training of a strictly Presbyterian family, and early religious associa-

tions, he seems to have been a sturdy Calvinist; and a great portion of this religious education and Presbyterian origin were engrafted upon his distinguished son, and are curiously distinguishable in his earlier writings. As has been remarked, especially in his Essays, there must be observed a singular familiarity, not simply with Scriptural phraseology, which might have been derived from any religious education, but with the pet phrases and formulas which are current among the Presbyterian and metaphysical divines. Who has not wondered, when reading his Essays, at the facility with which a comparatively unheard-of character, mentioned, perhaps, but once in one of the last books of the Old Testament, is suddenly brought forward as a comparison, or an illustration; and how some friendly Concordance has suddenly to be called in to our assistance before the Biblical citation has been made clear? His unflinching steadiness as a statesman, his Whig principles in politics and thought, his noble and ardent maintenance of freedom, are all partly referable, it has been said, to his Presbyterian origin, and to the free principles of which his father was ever the

distinguished advocate, and which he saw taught in his daily walk, — exhibiting a character as staunch and single-minded as those old Puritans he was so fond of describing. Zachary Macaulay, when yet quite young, was sent to Jamaica, as a spot suitable for the training of a West India merchant, then a popular and lucrative calling with adventurous Scotchmen, and the profession he was destined to adopt. About the period of his visit slavery was at its height in these Western regions ; and it was here that he first witnessed all the repulsive horrors of the system, which he afterwards helped to expose and partially to destroy.

Animated with the philanthropic desire to alleviate the sufferings of the negroes, he left Jamaica, we are told, and voluntarily exiled himself for many years to the pestilential climate of Sierra Leone, for the purpose of doing good amongst the ill-used blacks. His services, however, were not unrecognised by the Government, for he had not laboured long before he was made Governor of the colony. In this official capacity, backed by the authority of his appointment, he continued to assist

in the amelioration of the African race, receiving the friendly countenance and assistance of the greatest philanthropist of his time—William Wilberforce.

There are many pleasing testimonies as to the high mental endowments, and great moral worth of Zachary Macaulay, in this good man's "Life and Correspondence." In one place, writing to Mr. Thomas Babington (Lord Macaulay's uncle), he says: "I will by no means forget Macaulay. I think highly of his understanding. He appears to have a manly, collected mind." His correspondence with Macaulay was frequent, and he ever manifested the utmost interest in his mission to the West African colony. But one letter will serve to show the intimacy that existed between them.

W. WILBERFORCE, Esq., TO Z. MACAULAY, Esq.

(GOVERNOR OF SIERRA LEONE.)

"London, January 6, 1797.

"My dear Sir,—We have an expression, 'an Iliad in a nutshell.' To say that this might be properly affirmed of my letter would seem rather an extraordinary speech, but yet there is a sense in

which it would not be without meaning. And when a friend, who is too much occupied to write long epistles, who is also debarred from the free use of his pen by a constitutional infirmity, sends to one who loves him, in a distant country, a few hasty lines, as an assurance of kind regard and affectionate remembrance, the sheet has a value which is not to be estimated by the bulk of its contents, or the distinct meaning of every separate proposition contained in them.

“ To such a value this letter is entitled ; and it will not go beyond the truth in assuring you of my often thinking of you with affectionate interest and cordial approbation. There is something very striking to my mind in the idea of the many various ways in which we are employed on earth, and of the identity of views and motives which may animate all the different modifications of employment. You are doubtless in the line which Providence has pointed out to you—a most satisfactory consideration this, of which I am persuaded you feel the comfort.

“ News, public or private, you will hear from others, therefore I will break in upon you no

longer, but hastily subscribe myself, with hearty affection,

“Your faithful friend,

“W. WILBERFORCE.”*

When Zachary Macaulay returned to England we are not informed, but upon revisiting this country he associated himself with the great men of the Anti-Slavery Party, including the names of Clarkson and Buxton, and others equally zealous in the work of manumission. He was shortly, also, installed as editor of the *Christian Observer*, the organ of the abolition party, and it is worthy of remark, and curious as foreshadowing the power of his son, that, when upon an occasion he wished the literary assistance of Wilberforce, the latter wrote back that the editor was too clever with his own pen to require the help of an outsider.

About this time we are informed he married Selina, daughter of Mr. Thomas Mills, a bookseller in Bristol.

His intimacy with his old friend Wilberforce was still as close as when he was abroad, and could

* Wilberforce's Correspondence, vol. i., p. 153.

only communicate by letters which took months on their journey. Shortly after his return the philanthropist begged Macaulay to procure for him a copy of the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* as a present for a friend. The letter of acknowledgment, showing how the obliging friend rushed into the expense of a coach instead of taking the old-fashioned wagon, is very amusing:—

TO ZACHARY MACAULAY, Esq.

“ Near Bath, Sept. 30, 1803.

“ My dear Sir,—While I must call you an extravagant fellow for employing the coach instead of the wagon, which latter (the flying wagon, as it is humorously termed) is but three days on the wing, I am bound to thank you for your kind attention to my commission. It is observed by some writer, that there is in every man a certain vein or thread of shabbiness, which will sometimes show itself in opposition to the general strain of the character. Will you say, that I furnish an illustration of this principle, when I am thus jealous of coach hire? Be it as it may, the odd

shillings may be better employed than in clogging the wheels and increasing the load of the mail coach. Call it feeling for the horses, and so dignify my economy. However, I am sure you will not require any apology. I am interrupted and must break off.

"Yours ever affectionately,

"W. WILBERFORCE."*

The peculiar religious local party with which Zachary Macaulay allied himself was held up to public scorn as "The Clapham Sect."† With

* Wilberforce's Correspondence, vol. ii., p. 287.

† Jeffrey, in a letter to Mr. Empson (July, 1844), thus alludes to the elder Macaulay and other members of this sect. "I could not stop reading that admirable review of Stephens on the Clapham Worthies, which is all charmingly written, and many passages inimitably. The sketches of Granville Sharpe, C. Simeon, and Lord Teignmouth, are, beyond comparison, superior to any of _____'s elaborate portraits, or even any of Macaulay's stronger pictures, in vivacity and force of colouring, as well as in that soft tone of angelic pity and indulgence, which gives its character to the whole piece. The eulogies of H. Thornton and H. Martyn are rather overdone, I think; but Zac. Macaulay is excellent, and so are the slighter sketches of Will. Smith and the paternal Stephens. I hope they will give you as much pleasure as they have given me. They are so much in accordance, indeed, with all I love and admire in human writings, that I feel as if they had been intended for my especial gratification."—Cockburn's *Life of Jeffrey*.

this party, I believe, through Dr. Price their minister, the father of Samuel Rogers was in some manner allied. Its mission, apart from sundry peculiar religious tenets, was humanity to man and beast, and its teachings are pleasingly exemplified in the statement made in the “Recollections of the Table Talk of Samuel Rogers.”

“I was taught,” says the poet, “by my mother, from my earliest infancy, to be tenderly kind towards the meanest living thing; and, however people may laugh, I sometimes very carefully put a stray gnat or wasp out at the window.”

The philanthropist, Zachary Macaulay, to the day of his death, continued his benevolent exertions to effect the suppression of the slave trade, winning for himself an enduring fame, and a monument along with his friend Wilberforce in Westminster Abbey.*

* Gladstone, in speaking on the Slavery Question, in 1841, thus pays a tribute to this good man:—“There is another name still more strangely associated with it. I can only speak from tradition of the struggle for the abolition of slavery; but if I have not been misinformed, there was engaged in it a man who was the unseen ally of Mr. Wilberforce and the pillar of his strength—a man of profound benevolence, of acute understanding, of indefatigable industry, and of that self-denying

One of the sisters of this good man married Mr. Thomas Babington, a rich English merchant, often alluded to in the "Life of Wilberforce;" and the son destined to become so famous in literature, and such an ornament to the peerage, was named after him.

The family of the elder Macaulay have all been fortunate in life. Of a brother of Lord Macaulay we find a pleasing reminiscence in Cockburn's "Life of Lord Jeffrey," who, in writing to Mrs. Rutherford from Torquay (April 29, 1842), says:—

"We know nobody here but a brother of Macaulay's, who married a very sweet and beautiful daughter of Lord Denman's, last December, and has been honeymooning with her here ever since. He has the robust spirits and stout and kind heart of his brother, though without any of his fine understanding, and, indeed, is chiefly remarkable *for being alive*, after a ten years' residence at Sierra Leone. They are very easy people to live with, and, besides the constant spectacle of happy temper which is content to work in secret, to forego the recompence of present fame, and to seek its reward beyond the grave: the name of that man was Zachary Macaulay, and his son is a member of the existing Cabinet."

piness with which they delight me, have carried us to all their lovers' walks, and whispering places in the ocean caves, and we have driven together to Dartmouth and Dawlish, and laid in the germs of many pleasant recollections."

A sister of the late noble lord married Sir Charles Trevelyan, the present Governor of Madras.

CHAPTER III.

MACAULAY'S EARLY LIFE.—SUCCESS AT COLLEGE.—JOINS THE
“UNION” DEBATING CLUB.—FIRST SPEECH IN PUBLIC.—
CHANCES FOR SUCCESS.—HIS PREFERENCE FOR LITERATURE.—
JEFFREY ON LITERATURE.—MACAULAY'S LITERARY SYMPATHIES.

IN early life the education of Thomas Babington Macaulay was attended to at home, surrounded by the religious and moral influences just pointed out. The Bible was read aloud, and prayer was offered in the family circle, just as in Scotland. From this circumstance it has been stated, that although he could scarcely be called a Scotchman, yet his religious allusions were as distinctively Scotch as those of Sir Walter Scott himself; and yet, strange to say, in after life the two classes of men that he was most bitter upon were Scotchmen and Quakers. Previously to being sent to college, he was placed for a short time under the care of a Mr. Preston, at Shelford,

in Cambridgeshire. In 1818, however, the final step in his education was achieved, and he entered Trinity College, Cambridge. His career at the University, it is proverbially known, was very distinguished. In his first year, and when only nineteen years of age, he gained the Chancellor's medal for a poem on "Pompeii;" two years afterwards he gained the same Chancellor's medal for another poetic work called "Evening." The publication of these poems shortly afterwards was an event in the student's life, for they formed the first contribution to that literature of which he was destined to become the pride and the boast. Nor were they lost, as most literary first offerings usually are upon the reading world; they at once served, we are told, to bring the author into distinguished notice. Not content with these laurels, however, immediately after the publication of "Evening," he sought and gained the second Craven scholarship; and in 1822 took his bachelor's degree. Several anecdotes are in circulation relative to Macaulay's dislike of the mathematics, and in accordance with this dis-taste he did not compete for honours, but was,

nevertheless, in consideration of his great proficiency in other studies, elected a fellow of his college.

Perhaps there are not in the world any institutions so calculated to fit high-minded youth for future usefulness as our time-honoured seats of learning at Oxford and Cambridge. An excellent feature in both is the system of debating, usually carried on in societies attached to the colleges. To one of these nurseries for young orators the young and already vigorous Macaulay allied himself long before he left *Alma Mater*. In the Union Debating Society, we are told, he made a considerable figure, and spent much of his time; and after it was known that he was to study for the bar, it was whispered about that a great orator might shortly be expected.

After taking his bachelor's degree, his time was divided betwixt London and Cambridge, where he had his fellowship, until 1825, when he obtained his master of arts' degree. Just after this event, he underwent the usual course of study for the law, and in February, in the following year, was called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn.

The first speech on record that he is known to have made was delivered in 1824, at an Anti-Slavery meeting, where the tone he had caught up from the associates of his family, and the society in which his father moved, expressed itself with a strength and effect which foreshadowed the future orator, and which being at the same time exceedingly eloquent brought on him the laudation of the *Edinburgh Review*, and the opposition of the *Quarterly*—the former being the great quarterly organ of the party headed by Wilberforce and Clarkson, and the latter, with Croker at its head, of the planters and slave-owners of the West Indies—at that time, we are told, “very fierce from the excess of fear.” This speech led the way for Macaulay’s literary introduction to the *Edinburgh Review*. That journal pointed out the speech of the promising young man as superior to anything that had been delivered in Parliament, and noted Wilberforce’s friendly saying, that his old friend Zachary would, no doubt, joyfully bear all his apostleship brought upon him “for the gratification of hearing one so dear to him plead such a cause in such a manner.” In after life

the young orator occasionally advocated the cause of the Abolitionists, much to the joy, we learn, of his father's friends.

But what was far more important to his future prospects, the young student in the meantime began to develope his taste for literary pursuits. His chances for promotion in both professions were great. His father was in good circumstances, and was also a leading member of a fraternity that had some political influence. He had a fellowship. He was already known for considerable talents in debate. He had achieved high honours amongst a crowd of talented young men, possessing, perhaps, more family influence, but less mental vigour, than he had shown. He had a powerful frame, and his health was comparatively robust; and he now began to use his pen with singular power and felicity. Still it was only by unremitting industry that he so rapidly worked his way up to literary and political renown. That at heart he preferred and sought the former, notwithstanding the eulogistic records that exist as to his ability in "the noisy strife of political warfare," may be seen in an interesting

memorial preserved in Cockburn's "Life of Lord Jeffrey." Macaulay, it appears, some years after had discussed the pleasures of a literary over a political life with Mr. Empsen, a friend of Jeffrey, and to the latter it was sent for perusal. The letter is, perhaps, lost, but the answer of Jeffrey to Mr. Empsen is worthy of note:—

"My dear E.," writes that great Judge, "I return Macaulay's . . . It is a very interesting letter; and certainly puts the *pros* and *cons* as to public life in a powerful way for the latter. But, after all, will either human motives or human duties ever bear such a dissection? and should we not all become Hownynyms or Quakers, and selfish cowardly fellows, if we were to act on views so systematic? Who the devil would ever have anything to do with love or war? nay, who would venture himself on the sea, or on a galloping horse, if he were to calculate in this way the chances of shortening life, or forfeiting comfort, by such venturesome doings? And is there not a vocation in the gifts which fit us for particular stations, to which it is a duty to listen? Addison and Gibbon did well to

write, because they could not speak in public. But is that any rule for Macaulay? And then as to the tranquillity of an author's life, I confess I have no sort of faith in it, and am sure that as eloquent a picture might be drawn of its cares, and fears, and mortifications, its feverish anxieties, humiliating rivalries, and jealousies, and heart-sinking exhaustion, as he has set before us of a statesman. And as to fame, if an author's is now and then more lasting, it is generally longer withheld, and, except in a few rare cases, it is of a less pervading or elevating description. A great poet, or great *original* writer, is above all other glory. But who would give much for such a glory as Gibbon's. Besides, I believe it is in the inward glow and pride of consciously influencing the great destinies of mankind, much more than in the sense of personal reputation, that the delight of either poet or statesman chiefly consists. Shakespeare plainly cared nothing about his glory, and Milton referred it to other ages. And, after all, why not be *both* statesmen and authors, like Burke and Clarendon. I do not know why I write all this, for I really am

very busy, and it is such idle talking."—*Cockburn's Life of Jeffrey*, vol. ii., p. 297.

Macaulay's sympathies, however, it may be concluded, were from the beginning rather with the academic grove than with the noisy and bustling forum, and it has been remarked, "his tastes were hardly such as to fit him for the pursuit of forensic celebrity." It was, perhaps, this early predilection for the pen that prompted him, about this period, to apply himself with so much vigour to composition. "He wrote poetry," we are told, "he wrote essays, he wrote imaginary conversations, he wrote critiques—he wrote in every form."

CHAPTER IV.

PRAED AND MACAULAY.—MACAULAY'S EARLY WRITINGS.—KNIGHT'S QUARTERLY MAGAZINE.—STAFF OF YOUNG WRITERS.—MACAULAY'S CONTRIBUTIONS.—CHAS. KNIGHT IN TROUBLE.—THE CONTRIBUTORS' "JOLLIFICATION."—MACAULAY AND YOUNG COLERIDGE.—DE QUINCEY.—KNIGHT BRINGS BAD NEWS.—MACAULAY'S REMEDY.—ESSAY ON HISTORY.

HIS earliest contributions of essays and ballads appeared in a periodical called *Knight's Quarterly Magazine*, of limited circulation, but valuable as a nursery for rising authors. He had previously, I should state, forwarded some unimportant papers to the *Etonian*, a clever school publication, with the starting of which Winthrop Mackworth Praed had something to do. Miss Mitford, in her pleasing "Recollections of a Literary Life," thus notes the two contributors:—"It is now nearly thirty years ago that two youths appeared at Cambridge, of such literary and poetical promise as the University had not known since the days of Gray. What

is rarer still, the promise was kept. One of these 'marvellous boys' turned out a man of world-wide renown—the spirited poet, the splendid orator, the brilliant historian, the delightful essayist—in a word, Thomas Babington Macaulay, now, I suppose, incontestably our greatest living writer."

Praed never realised the splendid expectations which were raised by his college career. He is now comparatively unknown.

After a short time, it appears that young Macaulay's papers constituted the principal attraction of Knight's journal, and that notwithstanding the clever productions of other writers, the *Magazine* was principally sought after for the articles by the brilliant young student of Trinity College. From the weight and tone of Macaulay's pieces, Professor Wilson used to say, that its three volumes (beyond which the work did not extend) equalled in talent any other three in the compass of periodical literature. Macaulay's ballad of the "Battle of Naseby" is not to be found in the last edition of his "Lays of Ancient Rome." It has never, I believe, been printed since its first publication in *Knight's Magazine*, about the year 1824. From

the omission, it is obvious that the accomplished writer did not himself regard this ballad as deserving of republication. Strange it is, remarks a writer in that useful periodical, *Notes and Queries*, that the other contributions of Macaulay to this *Magazine* should not ere now have been reprinted. Some few of them have been so, and are become familiar as household words on both sides of the Atlantic. The others are as obscure as if still in manuscript. What does the public at large know of the “Fragments of a Roman Tale,” or the “Scenes from Athenian Revels;” in which the future historian tried his powers as a romancer and a dramatist—in the one case bringing before us Cæsar and Cataline, in the other, Alcibiades and his comrades? There are essays, too, by Macaulay, in this *Magazine*, of a lighter character than those in the *Edinburgh Review*, but not less brilliant than any in that splendid series which now rank as one of the most valuable contributions of the present age to the standard literature of England. It would not be one of the least weighty arguments against the extended law of copyright, which Macaulay succeeded in passing

(1842), that the public has been deprived of the enjoyment of such treasures as these by the too nice fastidiousness of their author. As on two former occasions, I suppose that they are likely to be first collected in Boston or New York, and that London will afterwards profit by the rebound.

Knight's Quarterly Magazine is now very scarce, and as it is so intimately connected with Macaulay's younger days, it may not prove uninteresting to the reader if I give some account of the numerous contributors who wrote for it. The writers adopted fictitious names, among which may be noticed—1, Marmaduke Villars; 2, Davenant Cecil: 3, Tristram Merton; 4, Irvine Montagu; 5, Gerard Montgomery; 6, Henry Baldwin; 7, Joseph Haller; 8, Peter Ellis; 9, Paterson Aymer; 10, Eustace Heron; 11, Edward Haselfoot: 12, William Payne; 13, Archibald Frazer; 14, Hamilton Murray; 15, Charles Pendragon; 16, Lewis Willoughby; 17, John Tell; 18, Edmund Bruce; 19, Reginald Holyoake; 20, Richard Mills; 21, Oliver Medley; 22, Peregrine Courtenay; 23, Vyvyan Joyeuse; 24, Martin Lovell; 25, Martin Danvers Heaviside. *Tristram Merton*

was Lord Macaulay, who wrote, as before stated, several sketches and five ballads. Peregrine Courtenay was Winthrop Mackworth Praed, who was, I believe, its editor. Henry Nelson Coleridge, Prof. Malden, and John Moultrie were also contributors, the first of whom wrote under the signature of Joseph Haller. Gerard Montgomery was the assumed name of the Rev. G. Moultrie. It was originally adopted by him in that most brilliant of all school periodicals, the *Etonian*, and the mask was thrown off in the list of contributors given at the end of the third volume. His longest poem in *Knight's Quarterly* was "La Belle Tryamour," which has since been republished in a volume of collected poems, with his name to them. The *Magazine* never extended beyond the third volume.

The earliest piece Macaulay contributed was "Fragments of a Roman Tale;" then an essay on "West Indian Slavery"—a subject upon which he would necessarily be well informed, as his father's house was a rallying point for the Abolitionists:—the third was on "The Royal Society of Literature." The second volume contains more contri-

butions than the first;—“Scenes from Athenian Revels,” a drama; “Songs of the Huguenots,—Song I—Montcoulour; Song II—Ivry;” “Criticisms on the principal Italian Writers, No. I—Dante.” This last piece is extremely interesting, as it shows from whence the illustrations and comparisons connected with early Italian literature were derived which are to be observed in the opening sentences of the celebrated essay on “Milton;” much of the matter contained in the essay in *Knight's Magazine* being similar to the well-known article in the *Edinburgh Review*. I believe this fact has not been pointed out before. The next contribution was two “Songs on the Civil War: I—The Cavaliers' March to London; II—The Battle of Naseby;” then another of the “Criticisms on the Italian Writers, No. II—Petrarch.” The last article sent to this volume was “Some Account of the Law-suit between the parishes of St. Dennis and St. George in the Water, Part I.”—an admirable take-off of a country parochial squabble. The third volume gives none of the names under which the authors wrote, so that it is only by conjecture that I can name Macaulay's contributions.

I believe we may accredit to his pen—"A Conversation between Mr. Abraham Cowley and Mr. John Milton, touching the great Civil War;" on "The Athenian Orators;" on "Mitford's Greece;" and "A Prophetic Account of a National Epic Poem—The Wellingtoniad."

Knight the publisher—a man who has done more for cheap literature than any other now living—had sad trouble with the spirited and fanciful young fellows who contributed to his *Magazine*. On issuing No. 4, he added an advertisement, wherein is this paragraph;—

"The *Quarterly Magazine* was established at the earnest solicitation of some young men of great talent and acquirements, who had distinguished themselves in a local miscellany [the *Etonian*] of no ordinary character. Their promises of support were cordial and enthusiastic—their ability to realize those promises was unquestionable. The public favour was largely bestowed upon the undertaking; and the work, as it proceeded, acquired a considerable distinction among the discerning and the intelligent. For this patronage the publisher is

most grateful. There were many things, however, connected with its management, which gave the publisher pain. He had to contend, in one or two instances, with unsettled opinions, with captious objections, but, above all, with something like a heartless indifference to the consequences of wanton neglect. It is too often the condition of genius that it fancies itself absolved from the ordinary laws of human action, and substitutes irregular excitements for settled principles. Whether or not to this cause is to be attributed the want of completion of two long poems in this work, the publisher will not presume to decide."

Knight's allusions to the difficulty of managing his staff of writers is very amusing.

A little further on, after remarking that the evils to which he has alluded "have reached their crisis," he states that he is compelled "to announce that the present number will be the last—the real cause of its stoppage being a Chancery injunction, which was issued to suppress the previous number, containing Byron's correspondence."

The young contributors, however, were not going to break up the establishment and separate

without a "jollification," and so they held what is styled in the *Magazine* an "Anniversary." The proceedings formed the subject of one of the last papers. The scene of the enjoyment was Eton, and the host of the tavern was Garraway. "Vyvyan Joyeuse," "Edward Haselfoot," "Heaviside," "Vernon," "Sir Thomas," "Gerard," and other contributors, were there at the *Cristopher*, to breakfast—an "Eton breakfast!" the report says, with kidneys, Curaçoa, and other good things. The boys had gone down to meet their Eton friends on the box of the old Royal Windsor, and with their appetites well whetted soon demolished the repast. Betwixt breakfast and dinner, criticisms and papers were read on Byron and Shelley—the very subjects for such young fellows—and 'till the hour of dining the only sounds which appear to have interrupted their literary deliberations were—"Waiter! a jorum of Queen's ale and the Stilton"—"Waiter! some brandy and water"—the calls of "Sir Thomas."

At the dinner they mustered very strong. The writer says, "I have not had many hours of my life more exquisite enjoyment than this meeting

with so many that I love and admire. There was 'Haller' (Coleridge), whom we had not seen for a twelvemonth, with his calm look of gentlemanly self-possession; 'Merton' (MACAULAY), *with his quick glance of penetration and decision*; 'Murray,' with his retiring politeness, which gave an additional charm to the power of his intellectual smile; 'Vyvyan,' with his cordial good-humour and his graceful badinage.

"These, and several more of our dear friends, greeted us with unaffected alacrity. But there were two strangers in the room that we did not recognise as of us. The one, a short, spare figure, with an expression in his eye that at once indicated the strength of the man of genius and the weakness of the valetudinarian, advanced with a slow pace of diffidence towards us, and thus addressed us:—'I fear, sir, that I am an intruder both upon your interesting conversation and your purposed enjoyments. I was looking around, sir, for my worthy friend, Mr. Paterson Aymer. By his cordial invitation, I have been tempted from my solitude, to join a company that I cannot but feel desirous of knowing, though I fear much the

weight—the heavy and unutterable weight of depression that bears me down—will render me an unfit partaker of your intellectual pleasures. Oh, sir, even now do I feel the gnawings of that poison with which I have drugged my veins. Fly the cursed spell, if you would continue to know peace of mind and body. But you will excuse me talking of myself.' We all looked at each other with surprise. 'Can it be?' was on every tongue. 'May I venture to ask, sir, whom I have the honour of seeing amongst us? Though Mr. Patterson Aymer be not yet arrived, his friends are ours.' My name, sir, is —; but you may have heard of me as a too celebrated *opium eater*.' We all involuntarily bowed: and in two minutes 'Haller' and our illustrious friend went deep in a discussion on political economy, while 'Murray' and 'Tristram' (MACAULAY) appealed to him, in the intervals of the debate, upon their contrary views of the knowledge of the Greeks in Europe at the time of Dante."

This anecdote—if I may call it such—of De Quincey, is curious. It indicates that he was fast changing into that little dried-up, parchment-

hided man that he became years afterwards—a walking Egyptian mummy, some one described him—and all through his disgraceful opium eating. But to continue the “Anniversary.” The dinner appears to have passed off very pleasantly—a little too learnedly, if we may believe the report—until the publisher (Knight) and the sub-editor were announced. Charles Knight had brought them bad news. It was a Chancery Injunction. A few words sufficed to explain. “Byron’s correspondence, and our review of that most pithy of letter-writers, are temporarily suppressed!” But it is satisfactory to learn, that the venison being excellent, and Mrs. Garraway’s pudding superb, before the claret came Knight’s countenance had brightened up, and the party were merry as guests at a marriage feast. The usual speeches and leave-takings (“Mr. Merton going to Leicestershire,” we are told) were afterwards gone through; and we find scraps of “Tristram Merton’s” (MACAULAY’S) conversation every now and then jotted down. For instance, when it was stated that the “three sheets on Lord Byron would have to be cancelled,” and that with their

present staff they could not supply the deficiency by the day of publication, "Tristram" hinted at a solution: — "Gentlemen," he remarked, "the bravest and the most glorious nations of antiquity were sometimes constrained to employ mercenaries. Let us look out for foreign aid." One of the young fellows immediately wrote to the editor (Mr. Walker) of the *European Review*! — and I dare say they thought it was an excellent joke.

The remainder of the evening was spent jovially. "Merton," we are told, became right eloquent; and the publisher, having discussed several bumboers of claret, voted the Chancery injunction a bore. The subject of phrenology was started, but "Merton" (MACAULAY) would not hear of it. He had no belief in it, and detested it. The argument ran so high, we are told, that "Vyvyan" broke a magnum, in the endeavour to show that its bumps were as clear as those of the cranium. A song was then sung, and we learn that it was followed by "great applause — bishop — punch royal — devilled kidneys — anchovy sandwiches — lights burn blue — we sleepy."

The whole affair, however, may have been heightened by the pen of the reporter.

With regard to the article on “History,” contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* in May, 1828, one reason, I imagine, why it was not reprinted with the other essays was, because many of its passages were reproduced in a different dress in the “History of England.” The counterpart of this passage, for instance, may be found in the first volume of the justly celebrated History:—

“The upper current of society presents no certain criterion by which we can judge of the direction in which the under current flows. We read of defeats and victories. But we know that nations may be miserable amidst victories, and prosperous amidst defeats. We read of the fall of wise ministers, and the rise of profligate favourites. But we must remember how small a proportion of the good or evil effected by a single statesman can bear to the good or evil of a great social system.”

It would seem, therefore, that this Essay on History—it is no review of the work the title of which heads the article, for it does not allude to it once—was the basis upon which the Historian

determined to build his “History of England;” and for this reason we may conjecture—and not, as a writer in the *Times* unknowingly remarked, because it was simply “a college exercise touched up”—it was omitted in the collection of republished essays.

Another article by Macaulay, on “Barrère,” appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, in 1844, which has not been republished. With respect to it, Sydney Smith once remarked, “that it was hardly worth while to crucify Barrère. Macaulay might as well have selected *Turpin*.”

CHAPTER V.

“MILTON.”—MACAULAY AND JEFFREY.—LITERARY ABILITY FORESHADOWED.—MACAULAY’S OPINION OF “MILTON.”—EXTRACT FROM ESSAY ON HISTORY.—MACAULAY’S POETICAL SQUIBS.—MOORE’S ANECDOTE.—MACAULAY’S FACETIÆ.—ENTERS PARLIAMENT.—SHIEL’S ANECDOTE.—JEFFREY AND MACKINTOSH.—JEFFREY’S OPINION OF MACAULAY.

IT was about this time that Macaulay produced his ballads of the “Spanish Armada,” and the “Battle of the League.” But his genius soon found a wider field than the old *Magazine*, and in August, 1825 (not 1826, as stated in a daily journal), some six months before his call to the bar, and while still under twenty-five years of age, and fresh from college, he contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* his famous essay on “Milton.”

This article may be said to have opened to Macaulay the portals of the guild of literature, and to have at once introduced him to the company of the best writers in the land—to such men as

Jeffrey, Smith, Horner, Brougham, Walter Scott, Hallam, Wilberforce, Lord Melbourne, Coleridge, Mackintosh, Moore, Leigh Hunt, Dr. Chalmers, Professor Wilson, Sir William Hamilton, Carlyle, Hazlitt, Campbell, Mill, Napier, and a host of other celebrities. It was the first of that long series of brilliant essays with which, during twenty years subsequently, he enriched the pages of the *Review*.

Jeffrey was delighted with the young contributor, and esteemed his production so highly that he immediately, we are told, secured his services for future numbers. A paragraph, however, in a very interesting work, which occasionally relates an anecdote of Macaulay, throws some light upon this circumstance, and perhaps explains the cause of the sudden intimacy. Lord Cockburn, in his "Life of Jeffrey" (vol. i., p. 279.), states, under the year 1825, that Jeffrey's practice, which was then at its zenith, "lessened his contributions to the *Review*, and made him feverish about new writers." "Can you not lay your hands on some clever young man who would write for us?" wrote Jeffrey to Mr. John Allen,

in the beginning of 1825. "The original supporters of the work are getting old, and either too busy or too stupid to go on comfortably; and here [Edinburgh] the young men are mostly Tories."

Some years later, after the Americans had set the example, the essays were collected and republished in this country; and, as those who have read these charming papers will remember, the exceedingly ornate essay on Milton stands first. The antithetical and brilliant mind of the Historian, who was afterwards to found a new style, and make men readers against their will, can be measured in this production. In it we observe that already he was a great reader; that he had stored his mind with the finest passages of the Italian poets, and knew the literary history of Italy sufficiently well to teach men older, and supposed to be better informed, than himself. His minute study of the History of England had commenced; and in this essay we have his earliest portraits of Charles and Cromwell, of the Royalists, and the sturdy old Puritans before whom he never appeared to be tired of standing. Indeed,

it was Macaulay who first pictured them with a mysterious grandeur, and clothed the coldest sect in history with something of the gorgeousness and colour which was the outward life of the ancient religious devotees of the Romish church. His "Bunyan," too, drawn five years later, was tinted with the same strong pencil. What was the author's mature opinion of "Milton" may be learnt from his own preface prefixed to the collected Essays. After stating that three papers on Utilitarian Philosophy were omitted, because "he is unwilling to offer what might be regarded as an affront to the memory of one [Mr. Mill], from whose opinions he still widely dissents," he remarks that "the criticism on Milton, which was written when the author was fresh from college, and which contains scarcely a paragraph such as his matured judgment approves, still remains overloaded with gaudy and ungraceful ornament." Every competent judge, it is believed, will endorse this statement. In his next contribution, however, he improved, as may be seen in the masterly essay on Machiavelli, which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* some eighteen months later. "It will

never," it has been said, "be so popular as the Milton article, which is very dazzling, but it is in every way a better work, and one can see in it the Macaulay of later days—his subtlety of thought, his tolerant temper, his high view of morality, his ideal of composition; and the same may be said on the articles on Hallam and Southey, which are next in order, and belong to the period before he entered Parliament." But this was Macaulay the essayist.

Some time previously, it should be stated, he had made a fine translation of Felicia's "Ode on the Deliverance of Venice from the Turks." This was at that period the most successful of his poetical pieces, and drew even from the *Quarterly Review* a full recognition of his great talents. The versification was pronounced to be loftily harmonious, and worthy of Milman. Thus had he already taken ground as an orator, a poet, and an essayist.

As previously stated, the article on "History," which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, has never been reprinted. Why Macaulay did not allow this beautiful piece of composition to be

included in his collected essays, it is difficult to imagine (unless it was for the reason just pointed out), as it abounds in fine passages, and presents to the reader the *beau ideal* of an historian as drawn by the great chronicler himself. But now that a fresh interest is attached to his writings, it is to be hoped that it will be printed and published, with other pieces in prose and verse which Lord Macaulay has been, perhaps, too anxious to consign to oblivion. Passages like this are too good to be lost:—"At the close of the third century after Christ, the prospects of mankind were fearfully dreary. A system of etiquette, as pompously frivolous as that of the Escorial, had been established. A sovereign almost invincible; a crowd of dignitaries minutely distinguished by badges and titles; rhetoricians who said nothing but what had been said ten thousand times; schools in which nothing was taught but what had been known for ages—such was the machinery provided for the government and instruction of the most enlightened part of the human race. That great community was then in danger of experiencing a calamity far

more terrible than any of the quick, inflammatory, destroying maladies to which nations are liable—a tottering, drivelling, paralytic longevity, the immortality of the Struldburgs, a Chinese civilisation. It would be easy to indicate many points of resemblance between the subjects of Diocletian and the people of that Celestial Empire where, during many centuries, nothing has been learned or unlearned ; where government, where education, where the whole system of life is a ceremony ; where knowledge forgets to increase and multiply, and, like the talent buried in the earth, or the pound wrapped up in the napkin, experiences neither waste nor augmentation.

“The torpor was broken by two great revolutions, the one moral, the other political ; the one from within, the other from without. The victory of Christianity over Paganism.”

There are also some political squibs by Macaulay, written at a time when these *jeux d'esprit* were in fashion, and when people who were not poets, or even had the smallest portion of poetry in their nature, tried their hand at this sort of composition. Macaulay's, however, were really

very good, as we learn from an interesting passage in "Moore's Diary," under the date, June, 1831.

Moore says:—"Went (Lord John and I together in a hackney coach) to breakfast with Rogers. The party, besides ourselves, Macaulay, Luttrell, and Campbell. Macaulay gave us an account of the state of the *Monothelite* controversy, as revived at present among some of the fanatics of the day. . . . In the course of conversation Campbell quoted a line—

‘Ye diners out from whom we guard our spoons.’

and looking over at me said significantly, ‘You ought to know that line.’ I pleaded not guilty; upon which he said, ‘It is a poem that appeared in the *Times*, which everyone attributes to you.’ But I again declared that I did not even remember it. Macaulay then broke silence, and said, to our general surprise, ‘That is mine;’ on which we all expressed a wish to have it recalled to our memories, and he repeated the whole of it. I then remembered having been much struck with it at the time, and said that there was another squib still better, on the subject of William

Bankes's candidacieship for Cambridge, which so amused me when it appeared, and showed such power in that style of composition, that I wrote up to Barnes about it, and advised him by all means to secure that hand as an ally. 'That was mine also,' said Macaulay, thus discovering to us a new power, in addition to that varied store of talent which we had already known him to possess. He is certainly one of the most remarkable men of the day."*

We must now, however, turn our attention from literature to politics, and witness the young man's entry into Parliament. The Whig party, then in power, soon recognised the merits of the son of Zachary Macaulay. His talents were so great, his writings so effective, and his future usefulness so apparent, that he was invited by the Whigs, during the Administration of the Grey Government, to accept an appointment as Commissioner of Bankruptcy. This was immediately followed by his becoming M.P. for the borough of Calne—a seat then, as now, in the nomination of

* Moore's Memoirs and Journal, by Lord John Russell, 8vo, 8 vols.

Lord Lansdowne. By the former he was rendered independent; by the latter, influential.

In Parliament, his success from the first was decided and complete, although his enemies have stated that he did not quite answer Ministerial expectations. All parties, however, are compelled to acknowledge that he was a vast gain to the Administration, who, "when their unpopularity began to be a difficulty, found in Macaulay a valuable spokesman and a constant apologist." In answer to a Tory of the old school, who spoke disparagingly of the young man, Mr. Sheil is reported to have roared out—"Nonsense, sir! don't attempt to run down Macaulay. He's the cleverest man in Christendom. Didn't he make four speeches on the Reform Bill, and get £10,000 a-year? Think of that, and be dumb." But this anecdote in a measure anticipates Macaulay's Parliamentary career for the next two or three years. True, he may be considered one of the chiefs in debate on the Reform Bill, which very shortly after his introduction to Parliament began to be agitated. On the 5th of April, 1830, he delivered his maiden speech, on the "Disabilities of the Jews:" and on

the 2nd of March following he spoke on Lord John Russell's motion for leave to bring in a Reform Bill. Although Macaulay was of the Whig party—indeed he desired to be considered as a “*thorough Whig*”—yet he brought forward an amount of toleration and liberal philosophy which must have appalled some of the older members. The man who sounded the praises of Hampden, Pym, and Falkland, would necessarily infuse a little liberalism into his politics. And this the supporters of the Grey Ministry found during the stormy passage of the Reform Bill through the House. He stood forward as the bold opponent of the utter rottenness and corruption of the then existing representative system ; indeed, we are told that some of the most Ciceronian sneers against rotten boroughs and nomination Parliaments were actually delivered by the *protégé* of Lord Lansdowne.

The part he took in the debates on this great popular measure was second only to the more spontaneous efforts of Lord Derby, then Mr. Stanley. Lord Jeffrey's opinion of Macaulay's abilities as a speaker, when compared with Lord Derby's, was, that the former “was more condensed, contained

the greatest weight of matter, and was more logical ;” the latter “ more easy, spirited, and graceful.” Indeed, by men of every shade of politics it was acknowledged that, in his defending the Bill against Peelites, Radicals, and Repealers, his speeches were remarkable evidences of the skill and readiness with which he could bring historical instances to bear upon immediate political events, without being at all embarrassed by the precedents. His speeches really were what he said those of Sir James Mackintosh were—spoken essays ; only, as has been remarked, Macaulay’s essays, unlike those of Sir James, were written in a highly rhetorical style. And that great reasoner himself, in speaking of the fourth night of the Reform Bill (1831), says—“ Macaulay and Stanley made two of the finest speeches ever spoken in Parliament.” And Jeffrey, too, giving an account of the second night’s debate on the second reading, in a letter to Lord Cockburn, chronicles his high opinion of the rising orator :—

“ No division last night, as I predicted, and not a very striking debate. A curious series of prepared speeches by men who do not speak regularly, and

far better expressed than nine-tenths of the good speeches, but languid and inefficient, from the air of preparation, and the want of nature and authority, with which they are spoken. There was but one exception, and it was a brilliant one. I mean *Macaulay*, who surpassed his former appearance in closeness, fire, and vigour, and very much improved, by the effect of it, by a more steady and graceful delivery. It was prodigiously cheered, as it deserved, and I think puts him clearly at the head of the great speakers, if not the debaters, of the House. I once meant to have said something, but I now think it impossible. Besides, Mackintosh and Macaulay have taken all my ideas, and I cannot stoop to reclaim them.”*

At another time he wrote, upon the occasion of a division in the early morning, that Macaulay made the speech of the House, and that “it contained the only argument to which any of the speakers who followed him applied themselves.”

Macaulay’s speech on the third reading of the Reform Bill created such a degree of interest as to warrant its republication in a pamphlet form.

* Lord Cockburn’s Life of Lord Jeffrey, vol. ii.

CHAPTER VI.

SYDNEY SMITH.—REFORM BILL.—MACAULAY'S SPEECH.—JOHN WILSON CROKER.—REPLIES TO MACAULAY.—FRANCIS'S DESCRIPTION OF MACAULAY.—PECULIAR HABITS.—MANNER IN THE "HOUSE."—STYLE OF SPEAKING.—WITHOUT ACTION.—HELPS THE ABOLITIONISTS.—ELECTED FOR LEEDS.

ABOUT this period a famed antagonist to Macaulay was seen in the person of John Wilson Croker, who brow-beated the young statesman in Parliament, and attacked him in the *Quarterly Review*. But in all their encounters, whether within the walls of the House, or in the journals where each was a foremost man, the favourite of the Whig party was more than his match. Croker failed, as the *Times* stated, as, other things being equal, the man of detail must always fail against the man of broad views and sweeping generalizations. Macaulay, also, had got to be too much a favourite with influential and clever men to be talked down by a dozen talented opponents.

Sydney Smith respected and admired him from the commencement of his career, and writing to the Countess Grey, soon after Macaulay had taken his seat in Parliament, said in his note :—

“Pray give John Russell an office; and Macaulay is well worth your attention; make him Solicitor-General.”

It is curious, too, to note that Sydney Smith had observed and spoken of the number of reviewers in Parliament at this time. “You see,” he wrote in a letter to a friend, “Jeffrey has been nearly killed at his election (January, 1831). How funny to see all the Edinburgh Reviewers in office !”

Macaulay, in his justly celebrated Reform speech (September 20, 1831), after giving utterance to such stirring sentences as these :—

“Thinking thus of the public opinion concerning reform—being convinced that this opinion is the mature product of time and of discussion—I expect no reaction. I no more expect to see my countrymen again content with the mere semblance of a representation, than to see them again drowning witches, or burning heretics—trying causes by red-hot ploughshares, or offering up human sacrifices to wicker idols. I no more expect a reaction in favour of Gatton and Old Sarum, than a

reaction in favour of Thor and Odin. I should think such a reaction almost as much a miracle as that the shadow should go back upon the dial”—

and sifting the question in every fair and reasonable way, wound up—as was generally his custom—with a splendid dramatic parallel. A member had been advising the House of Lords to reject the Bill. Macaulay said:—

“ I cannot but wonder that such advice should proceed from the lips of men who are constantly lecturing us on the duty of consulting history and experience. Have they ever heard what effects counsel like their own, when too faithfully followed, have produced ? Have they ever visited that neighbouring country, which still presents to the eye, even of a passing stranger, the signs of a great dissolution and renovation of society ? Have they ever walked by those stately mansions, now sinking into decay, and portioned out into lodging-rooms, which line the silent streets of the Faubourg St. Germain ? Have they ever seen the ruins of those castles whose terraces and gardens overhang the Loire ? Have they ever heard that from those magnificent hotels—from those ancient castles—an aristocracy as splendid, as brave, as proud, as accomplished as ever Europe saw, was driven forth to exile and beggary, to implore the charity of hostile governments and hostile creeds—to cut wood in the back settlements of America, or to teach French in the school-rooms of London ? And why were those haughty nobles destroyed with that utter destruction ? Why were they scattered over the face of the earth, their titles abolished, their escutcheons defaced, their parks wasted, their palaces dismantled, their

heritage given to strangers? Because they had no sympathy with the people—no discernment of the signs of their times; because, in the pride and narrowness of their hearts, they called those whose warnings might have saved them, theorists and speculators; because they refused all concession, till the time had arrived when no concession would avail.

“I have no apprehension that such a fate awaits the nobles of England. I draw no parallel between our aristocracy and that of France. Those who represent the Lords as a class, whose power is incompatible with the just influence of the middle orders in the State, draw the parallel, and not I. They do all in their power to place the Lords and Commons of England in that position, with respect to each other, in which the French gentry stood with respect to the *Tiers Etat*; but I am convinced that these advisers will not succeed.”

Croker replied. And to show the power with which these old debates were sustained by the chiefs of a past age, I append a portion of his speech. The reader will observe, that the hackneyed attack upon Macaulay for his “brilliancy” and “illustration” was already stereotyped—as it continued to be long after.

“Not satisfied (said Mr. Croker) with those vague generalities, and that brilliant declamation which tickle the ear and amuse the imagination, without satisfying the reason, the learned gentleman unluckily, I think, for the force of his appeal,

thought proper to descend to argumentative illustration and historical precedents. But whence has he drawn his experience? Sir, he sought his weapon in the very armoury to which, if I had been aware of his attack, I should myself have resorted, for the means of repelling it. He reverted to the early lessons of the French revolution; and the echoes of the deserted palaces of the Faubourg St. Germain were reverberated in the learned gentleman's eloquence, as ominous admonitions to the peerage of England. He thinks that frightful period—the dawn of that long and disastrous day of crime and calamity—bears some resemblance to our present circumstances, and he thinks justly: but different, widely different, is the inference which my mind draws from this careful comparison."

Such are short specimens of the speeches delivered by these champions of partyism—both self-made men, both eminent in Parliament, both reviewers, and both learned, although not equally so, in the details of the history of their country. But the reader will be anxious to learn something of the personal appearance and manner of Macau-

lay. Mr. Francis has admirably drawn him:—“ Macaulay, in his personal appearance, and in the material or physical part of his oratory, contradicts altogether the ideal portrait one has formed on reading his speeches. Every man would, of course, have his own especial hallucination; but the chances are ten to one that the majority would have associated with his subject every attribute of the intellectual—investing him in imagination with a noble and dignified presence, and especially with a voice fit to give utterance to those fine passages of declamation with which his speeches abound. The contrast of the reality is in many respects striking. Nature has grudged Macaulay height and fine proportion, and his voice is one of the most monotonous and least agreeable of those which usually belong to our countrymen north of the Tweed—a voice well adapted to give utterance with precision to the conclusions of the intellect, but in no way formed to express feeling or passion. Macaulay is short in stature, round, and with a growing tendency to aldermanic disproportions. His head has the same rotundity as his body, and seems stuck on it as firmly as a pin-

head. This is nearly the sum of his personal defects; all else, except the voice, is certainly in his favour. His face seems literally instinct with expression; the eye, above all, full of deep thought and meaning. As he walks, or rather straggles, along the street, he seems as if in a state of total abstraction, unmindful of all that is going on around him, and solely occupied with his own mind.” He appeared, at times, to be attacking his opponents in debate, or building up some grand historic structure to charm his evening auditory. Those persons who, years ago, chanced to meet him in the Strand or Temple (he held chambers for a short time here), threading his way unconsciously, “looking at the pavement, and moving his lips as in repetition or soliloquy,” were apt to remark to the next friend they chanced to meet, “Macaulay is going to give us a speech to-night”—and the prognostication usually proved correct. As Francis remarks, you could not help thinking that literature with him was not a mere profession or pursuit, but that it had almost grown a part of himself, as though historical problems or analytical criticism were a part of his daily and regular intellectual

food. To continue Francis's excellent and life-like description:—

"In the House of Commons the same abstraction is still his chief characteristic. He enters the House with a certain pole-star to guide him—his seat; how he reaches it seems as if it were a process unknown to him. Seated, he folds his arms, and sits in silence, seldom speaking to his colleagues, or appearing to notice what is going forward. If he has prepared himself for a speech, it will be remarked that he comes down much earlier than usual, being very much addicted to speaking before the dinner hour, when, of course, his memory would be more likely to serve him than at a later hour in the night, after having endured for hours the hot atmosphere of the House, and the disturbing influence of an animated debate. It is observable, too, that, on such occasions, a greater number of members than usual may be seen loitering about the House. An opening is made in the discussion, and he rises, or rather darts up from his seat, plunging at once into the very heart of his subject, without exordium or apologetic preface. In fact, you have for a few

seconds heard a voice, pitched in alto, monotonous, and rather shrill, pouring forth words with inconceivable velocity, ere you have become aware that a new speaker, and one of no common order, has broken in upon the debate. A few seconds more, and cheers—perhaps from all parts of the House—rouse you completely from your apathy, compelling you to follow that extremely voluble, and not very enticing voice, in its rapid course through the subject on which the speaker is entering, with a resolute determination, as it seems, never to pause. You think of an express train, which does not stop even at the chief stations. On, on he speeds, in full reliance on his own momentum, never stopping for words, never stopping for thoughts, never halting for an instant, even to take breath, his intellect gathering new vigour as he proceeds, hauling the subject after him, and all its possible attributes and illustrations, with the strength of a giant, leaving a line of light on the pathway his mind has trod, till, unexhausted, and apparently inexhaustible, he brings this remarkable effort to a close by a peroration, so highly sustained in its declamatory power, so abounding

in illustration, so admirably framed to crown and clench the whole oration, that surprise, if it has even begun to wear off, kindles anew, and the hearer is left utterly prostrate and powerless by the whirlwind of ideas and emotions that has swept over him.”*

But with all this remarkable mental vigour, this outpouring of a mind filled to the extent of human knowledge upon the subject in consideration, there was scarcely any bodily movement—no sawing in the air, striking with the clenched fist, and bending of the body, as if each brilliant thought cost the body a painful spasm. As a journal remarks, his feet were planted immovable on the ground. One hand was fixed behind him, across his back; and in this rigid attitude, with only a slight movement of his right hand, he poured forth his sentences.

I should state, too, that although so successful in Parliament, and flattered in high circles, he still helped occasionally the friends of his father and his youth, the Abolitionists. It has been stated, but wrongly and maliciously, that he used the

* Francis's *Orators of the Age*. This sketch was made about fifteen years ago.

amiable Wilberforce as a stepping-stone to position and power, and that when he had arrived at his ambitious destination, he forgot or knew not the road by which he came. But the statement is best answered by the fact, that his most impassioned speeches, which were nothing but the great out-gushings of a noble heart, were delivered in the cause of manumission at Freemasons' Tavern. And greatly did he rejoice the hearts of his father's friends by this advocacy. It is a pity that these speeches are buried back in the journals of the period. Were they accessible they would reveal in Macaulay a new character. We should see in them the orator of the moment, when the greatest thoughts are often struck out by the mind at full heat. We should see him without his elaborate preparation, which always attended his Parliamentary speeches, and in after life placed him in a position that he could not speak to his own or his friends' satisfaction without previous study.

But it is time to resume the narrative. In 1832, with the new Parliament which assembled after the passing of the Reform Bill, he was returned to the House of Commons as the liberal representa-

tive of Leeds, upon the occasion of its being enfranchised. His fellow member for the borough was the late Mr. John Marshall, jun. Macaulay had no personal or local ties to the town; and his election as the free choice of the influential constituency shows how completely his political position was established. Soon after this, in token of services performed for the late Administration, he was appointed Secretary to the Board of Control.

CHAPTER VII.

JEFFREY'S OPINION OF "MAC.'S" SPEECH.—"BRILLIANCY."—THE MARVELS OF THE EAST.—SAILS FOR INDIA.—CONSTRUCTS A NEW PENAL CODE.—OPINIONS AS TO THE DOCUMENT.—SPOKEN OF AS THE "BLACK ACT."—EFFECT OF INDIA ON HIS WRITINGS.—ESSAYS WRITTEN ABROAD.—RETURNS TO ENGLAND.

UPON resuming his seat in the House we find Macaulay as active as ever, and we have his speeches on the "Resignation of the Ministers," "Slavery in the Colonies," "The Dutch Loan Bill," "Disturbances in Ireland," "Slavery in the Colonies (2)," and many others, plainly showing that he had not yet ceased to speak on behalf of the favourite measure of his father. It was about this time that Jeffrey wrote to Lord Cockburn (16th July, 1853)—"I breakfasted to-day at Rogers', with Macaulay and Sydney Smith! both in great force and undaunted spirit. Mac. is a marvellous person. He made the very best speech that has been made this

session, on India, a few nights ago, to a House of less than fifty. The Speaker, who is a severe judge, says he rather thinks it the best speech he ever heard.”

From this mention we find that India had already begun to occupy his attention.

If there is one quality which may be expressed in one word as characterising Macaulay’s mind, it is “brilliancy.” I don’t know that I could find another term, unless I said “gorgeousness.” It is the one great feature of his History, his Essays, his oratory, and explains in a measure his visit to India. Some have said that his journey was the result of a conviction that in the House of Commons he was out of his proper sphere; others have remarked, that the emolument was the chief inducement to the step; while others have said, and perhaps with a portion of truth, that he had probably discovered by this time that he was more a historian than a statesman, and that he was happier and more useful amongst his books than in office and debate. My own opinion is, that the grandeur and mysterious splendour of the Eastern Empire was the

principal attraction. Already, before he set foot in India, he had pictured to himself and to his auditory the marvels of the Oriental world. Dr. Grant, the President of the Board of Control, bringing in a Bill to amend the Charter of the East India Company, there was an animated discussion. Macaulay spoke on the second reading, and his speech contains such sentences as these — he is speaking of the anomaly of a company governing an empire :—

“ That empire is itself the strangest of all political anomalies. That a handful of adventurers from an island in the Atlantic should have subjugated a vast country, divided from the place of their birth by half the globe—a country which, at no very distant period, was merely the subject of fable to the nations of Europe—a country never before violated by the most renowned of Western conquerors—a country which Trajan never entered—a country lying beyond the point where the phalanx of Alexander refused to proceed; that we should govern a territory 10,000 miles from us—a territory larger and more populous than France, Spain, Italy, and Germany put together

—a territory, the present clear revenue of which exceeds the present clear revenue of any state in the world, France excepted—a territory inhabited by men differing from us in race, colour, language, manners, morals, religion ; these are prodigies to which the world has seen nothing similar. Reason is confounded. We interrogate the past in vain."

It was quite natural that a man who took such a view of India, should desire to see it; and to the East he sailed soon after (February, 1834), having been appointed a member of, and legal adviser to, the Supreme Council. His constituents at Leeds were taken by surprise ; they had imagined that the patriotic member was never to have resigned unless in obedience to their commands. I believe that some unpleasant and snapish things were said in the journals at the time about "emoluments," and "Nabobs;" but they were soon forgotten by readers with whom they had no weight.

The principal object of the Government in Macaulay's mission to India, was the construction of a new code of law suitable for the empire. The law for adjudging punishments in the case of

crime was in a wretched and disgraceful condition, and Macaulay was selected to reconstruct it, from the interest he had taken in the subject whilst in Parliament. That he had thought and pondered upon the matter may be seen from this extract of his speech in the House on the night of 10th July, 1833:—

“I believe that no country ever stood so much in need of a code of laws as India, and I believe also that there never was a country in which the want might so easily be supplied. I said that there were many points of analogy between the state of that country after the fall of the Mogul power, and the state of Europe after the fall of the Roman empire. In one respect the analogy is very striking. As in Europe then, so in India now, there are several systems of law widely differing from each other, but co-existing and co-equal. The indigenous population has its own laws. Each of the successive races of conquerors has brought with it its own peculiar jurisprudence: the Mussulman, his Koran and its innumerable commentators—the Englishman, his statute book, and his term reports.”

Upon his arriving at the seat of Government in Calcutta, great attention was paid to the new member from England. He was exempted from all share in the administration of affairs ; he had four assistants to help him in his labours ; and the penal code which was produced under his superintendence is, therefore, mainly to be attributed to him. This document has been variously estimated. His enemies speak of it as having cost a great sum of money, but as being, in reality, utterly worthless. His extreme admirers have leaned too much in the other direction, and have characterised it as one of the finest productions of modern statesmanship. The truth lay betwixt the two opinions. The code, consisting of twenty-six chapters divided into nearly 500 clauses, was not practicable. Its divisions were excellent, and its chapters unsurpassed ; but still it was not at once capable of adoption. The idea of “brilliancy” had been intensified rather than dulled in the lawyer’s mind, and the consequence was that the code was too good to be true : mankind in India was not fit for it, and it had to be confessed that it would not work.

The variety of races and customs to which it was applied has prevented even the attempt to put it in practice. We learn from a competent authority that one of its enactments was so odious to the English inhabitants that they gave it the appellation of the "Black Act." It abolished the right of appealing from the local courts to the supreme court at the Presidency. This right had hitherto been exclusively enjoyed by Europeans, and now it was proposed to put them on the same footing with natives, giving to both a certain right of appeal, but appeal only to the highest provincial courts. It was practically, the *Times* states, the same measure which roused the inhabitants of Calcutta to indignant remonstrance immediately before the outbreak of the mutiny, and which, being put forward at such a time, showed the confidence of our Indian officials in the justice of the Hindoo population.

No man, perhaps, goes through life without one mistake; and this, we may suppose, was Macaulay's. It seems impossible that a man should learn the entire peculiarities of a great nation in less than three years. If Macaulay had personally

studied the people and the country for a longer period he might possibly have prevented that one error in his political career. As it was, his residence abroad was not thrown away. His writings ever afterwards received an Eastern tinge, as though some gorgeous Oriental pageant was continually passing before his mind. His experience, too, was enlarged, and his knowledge extended ; and upon his return, he was enabled to write and speak about India with a minuteness of detail and vividness of conception that are unsurpassed in his treatment of any other subject. At the same time that he attended to his official duties, he was not idle with his pen. He continued, we are told, still to be one of the staff of the *Edinburgh Review* ; and some of his most elaborate articles were written and sent over from Calcutta. The essays on “Clive” and “Warren Hastings” owe their great power to his residence in India ; and the probability is, that they were sketched there, although afterwards written in England. By some it is considered that they are the best pieces he ever wrote. The *Times* states, with reference to them, “Nothing can be more masterly

than his views, nothing more picturesque than his narration, nothing more just than his admiration of the men, combined with condemnation of their acts. The English is his best, his most finished style. We may read them a dozen times without ever tiring of them."

The essays he wrote whilst abroad are those on "Mackintosh's History of the Revolution" (July, 1835) — in the reprint he mentions the circumstance of his absence as an apology for some unnecessary asperity — and "Lord Bacon" (July 1837), teeming with references and authorities, and showing the powers of his vast memory away from libraries and other helps.

Whilst in India, I might remark, he wrote the inscription for the statue of Lord William Bentinck.

After remaining in the East not quite three years he returned to England. For the next two years, he took no active part in Parliament. All that we know of him is, that he was busily employed drawing up reports on India, writing essays, and planning literary schemes. The essays he wrote prior to again resuming the duties of a

representative in Parliament are, "Sir William Temple," and that on "Gladstone on Church and State." That his popularity was great at this period we have many proofs. Sydney Smith remarked to a friend, "You must study Macaulay when you come to town. He is incomparably the first lion in the metropolis; that is, he writes, talks, and speaks better than any man in England." It is probable that at this time the "History of England" was thought of, and the collection of materials commenced. In the letters of some of his friends, hints are dropped which show that he had mentioned the subject to them.

With respects to his Indian reports, Sydney Smith wrote to Sir George Philips, in September, 1838, "get, and read, Macaulay's papers upon the Indian courts and Indian education: they are admirable for their talent and their honesty. We see why he was hated in India, and how honourable to him that hatred is." This opinion of Macaulay's official character in India is valuable; and, from the known character of the speaker, may be considered impartial.

CHAPTER VIII.

ELECTED FOR EDINBURGH.—FAVOURS VOTING BY BALLOT.—CHosen SECRETARY AT WAR.—THE BRAY OF EXETER HALL.—EXTRACT FROM THE SPEECH.—REJECTED AT EDINBURGH.—THE “HISTORY” FIRST MENTIONED.—RE-ELECTED AT EDINBURGH.—FURTHER SCOTCH HONOURS.—EXCITEMENT ON HIS RE-APPEARANCE.—RAISED TO THE PEERAGE.—CLOSING SCENE.—BURIAL IN THE “GREAT ABBEY.”

IN June, 1839, Macaulay again turned his eyes towards Parliament, and was triumphantly, and almost without expense, returned by the citizens of Edinburgh. Perhaps this was mainly owing, however, to his avowal at the Edinburgh hustings, that the ballot, household suffrage, and short Parliaments, were prominent points of his political creed. At all events, we know that he was exceedingly gracious. Sydney Smith good-humouredly wrote, in a letter to a friend—“Yes, I agree, he is certainly more agreeable since his return from India.” And Jeffrey wrote to the

Lord Advocate Rutherford, from Craigcrook, 3rd June, 1839—

“ Macaulay has got on beautifully here, and not only delighted all true and reasonable Whigs, but surprisingly mollified both Tories and Radicals. They will give him no trouble to-morrow, unless some blackguard Radicals should hold up their dirty hands and bellow at the nomination. But I think there is no chance of this. The more he is known, however, the more he is liked. He relies a great deal on you for counsel and information on all local questions; and I have undertaken that you shall not grudge him your assistance.”

On the 18th he was in Parliament, and spoke on the occasion of Mr. Grote’s motion, for leave to bring in a Bill to take votes by way of ballot. Macaulay was in favour of the measure; and for a moment, we are told, the reformers flattered themselves they had gained the most eloquent man in Parliament to their cause. But the restrictions, without which he would not consent to the Bill, were such as to displease the too sanguine Radicals, and it is said that Edinburgh was immediately divided upon the question of his re-election.

His next step was to the cabinet. He was chosen Secretary at War, during the Administration of Lord Melbourne. Macaulay maintained this position until September, 1841, when the Whig Ministry, in which he served, gave way to the second cabinet of Sir Robert Peel, and he (Macaulay) was consequently deprived of office. However much his modified enthusiasm for the ballot may have disturbed certain of his constituents in Edinburgh, certain it is that at the general election which followed immediately afterward his seat was undisturbed. He was re-elected, and continued to sit for that city. During the whole time of Sir Robert Peel's rule he was conspicuous as an active member of the Whig opposition, and as a consistent advocate of free-trade and other liberal measures. In 1846, Sir Robert, having carried his great measure of commercial reform, succumbed to the unceasing attacks of the "Country Party," and made way for the return of the Whigs under Lord John Russell. Macaulay resumed office in this Administration, as Paymaster-General of the Forces, with a seat in the cabinet; and he fulfilled the duties of the position until 1847, when

he unexpectedly lost his seat in Parliament ;—and the reason was this. A short time previously (April, 1845), during the debate on the subject of the Maynooth endowment, he spoke in favour of the grant to the Roman Catholics, and ventured to allude to “the *bray* of Exeter Hall.” The expression had been remembered by his constituents, who disagreed with him on the subject of the Maynooth Grant, and when the day of election came he was ousted, and Mr. Cowan, a citizen whose theological bias and ecclesiastical views were more to their liking, was chosen as their representative. But I cannot do better than to give that portion of Macaulay’s telling and stinging speech. He is speaking of a Bill brought in by the Tories some years before, which, under the plea of keeping good order in Ireland, would have “disfranchised the people by tens of thousands :”—

“Where is the Irish Registration Bill? Flung away! Positively pronounced by its authors to be so oppressive, and destructive of the representative system, that no Minister of the Crown could venture to propose it! That Bill having been thrown away, what has been substituted for it? Why

the present Bill for the Endowment of Maynooth College. Did ever person witness such legerdemain? You offer to the eager, honest, hot-headed Protestant a Bill to take privileges away from the Roman Catholics of Ireland, if he will only assist you to power. He lends you his aid; and then, when you are in power, you turn round on him and give him a Bill for the religious endowment of the Roman Catholic college in Ireland. Is it strange that such proceedings as these should excite indignation? Can we wonder at the clamour which has been raised in the country, or be surprised at the petitions which have been showered, thick as a snow-storm, on the tables of the House? Is it possible that the people out of doors should not feel indignation at the very parties who, when we are in office, voted against the Maynooth Grant, are now being whipped into the House in order to vote for an increased Maynooth Grant? The natural consequences follow. Can you wonder that all those fierce spirits whom you have taught to harrass us now turn round and begin to worry you? The Orangeman raises his howl, and *Exeter Hall* sets up its bray, and Mr.

McNiel is horror-stricken to think that a still larger grant is intended for 'the priests of Baal' at the table of 'Jezebel,' and your Protestant operatives of Dublin call for the impeachment of the Minister in exceedingly bad English."

The rejection, we are told, caused great surprise, and was warmly discussed all over the country. Regret at the fact of a man known to fame as a poet, essayist, and orator being thus rejected by so important a constituency, was so generally expressed, that Macaulay might easily have found another body of electors anxious for his services; but he preferred availing himself of the opportunity thus presented of withdrawing altogether from the duties of Parliament. His admirers, however, we learn, received some consolation when it was announced that he was to devote his leisure to the grand project of writing a History of England. But upon this subject we shall come to speak presently. Amongst his private friends it had been known for many years that he was busily engaged upon the work; and Moore, under date Dec. 3, 1841, says:—

" Macaulay, another of the guests (at Bowood),

and I, stayed for some time. He is a most wonderful man, and I rejoice to learn that the world may expect from him a History of England, taken up, I learn, where Hume leaves off. Rogers directed my attention to the passage in his last *Edinburgh* article, where he describes Warren Hastings' trial, and the remarkable assemblage of persons and circumstances which it brought together. Agreed perfectly with R. as to the over-gorgeousness of this part of the article. But the whole produces great effect, and is everywhere the subject of conversation.*

And Jeffrey, in a note to a friend, remarked just after (March, 1843):—"After breakfasting with Macaulay, and making him read a bit of his History, I went up to Lockhart's."†

At the next general election, in 1852, Macaulay's friends desired him again to stand for Edinburgh; but he was not the man to solicit the good graces of a constituency who had previously, and without cause, as it afterwards appeared, turned their backs

* Moore's Letters and Journal, edited by Lord John Russell, 8 vols.

† Lord Cockburn's Life of Jeffrey, 2 vols. 8vo.

upon him. The more earnestly Macaulay refused to allow his name to be put in nomination, so much the more urgently did the people of Edinburgh solicit him to become their member. They had found that they had lost character with the other elective bodies of England in refusing to elect him before, and now, to recover the good opinion of the country, they determined to accept no other candidate. He was re-elected without being asked to issue an address, to attend a meeting, to show himself for once upon the hustings, or bear one farthing of the expense. He certainly was prevailed upon to meet his electors in the Edinburgh Music Hall, to thank them for his return to Parliament; and it is interesting to know from the newspapers of the day, that upon his standing up “he was received with a double round of the most enthusiastic applause.” In going northward in the autumn, he delivered a speech that did much to clear the way for a coalition Government, which he afterwards supported in the House of Commons by two orations, that have not yet been collected with his other speeches. We learn, however, that they were not equal to his earliest efforts.

The act was praiseworthy on the part of the good people of the Modern Athens, and the Historian sat for a short time again in Parliament, although an attack of heart complaint, which was eventually the cause of his death, compelled him to avoid the excitement of public speaking. It should be stated, that the Scotch people further tried to make reparation for the slight formerly shown to Macaulay, by bestowing upon him such honours as were within their power.

In 1848, he was chosen Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow, and delivered an inaugural address, memorable for its ability; and, six years afterwards, on the death of Professor Wilson, he was further complimented by being elected President of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution.

During Macaulay's absence from the House (1847—1852), he was sorely missed, although before he had quitted that distinguished assembly his speeches were of unfrequent occurrence. When, however, he again returned to his old seat, with new literary honours accumulated upon him, the excitement to hear him was immense. "From the Courts," a journal states, "the refreshment

rooms, the committee-rooms, from every corner to which the news could spread that Macaulay was 'up,' the rush was as if for a matter of life or death."

In 1849, the same year in which the two first volumes of his "History of England" were published, he was nominated Professor of Ancient History in the Royal Academy.

His Parliamentary career, however, was rapidly drawing to a close. He spoke seldom, and men felt that henceforward their opportunities would be few. It was apparent that his health was failing. Age was fast creeping upon him, sooner, perhaps, than upon most men similarly robust, and he could not address public assemblies without pain and inconvenience. After a few sessions, in 1856, he retired from the House of Commons, thus ending his distinguished Parliamentary career.

The remainder of Macaulay's life was devoted to the great object of his ambition, and the glory of his career, his "History of England." Of this magnificent memorial of his genius I shall speak at length presently. As stated in the introductory chapter, Macaulay, not

long since, removed from his old residence in the Albany, to Campden-hill, Kensington. In 1857 he was raised to the Peerage, a graceful compliment to literature. But the richly decorated hall which receive that august company was seldom visited by Lord Macaulay, and the Peers of the realm were not often instructed by his voice. He was tremulous and decrepit, and the fire which had animated his youth had sunk within him. His blue eyes had lost their sparkle, and his full face was wrinkled and haggard. A bronchial affection, too, had shown itself, which added to his other ailments. Although of a quick and irritable temper when young, in later years he became considerate and kind. His servants, indeed, found in him the best of masters, benevolent and charitable in the extreme. The sums of money which he devoted to benevolent and charitable purposes were large in comparison with his income.

It had been his custom in clear weather to walk about the grounds, on the fine hill which overlooks Holland House—to him a spot full of the most pleasing recollections—and within a few days of his decease he wandered for the last time

over this classic spot. Here, on the night of the 21st ult., with the last shadows of the fading year, within sound of the rooks of Holland House, and almost within sight of those halls which in his youth were the favourite resort of “scholars philosophers, and statesmen,” passed away the spirit of THOMAS BABINGTON LORD MACAULAY.

Lord Macaulay was buried on Monday, the 9th instant, in Westminster Abbey. The great and the noble of the land, including many old and dear friends, formed the procession. The grave of the great Historian lies in Poet’s Corner, at the foot of Addison’s statue, and close to the grave of Isaac Barrow, one of the great Trinity of Cambridge men—Macaulay’s own college. The historian lies near Camden—one of the fathers of English history. Near him are the remains of Johnson, Garrick, Sheridan, and Gifford—the Tory editor of the *Quarterly Review*. He lies facing the statue of the poet of “The Pleasures of Hope,” at whose funeral the noble historian helped to bear the pall.

MACAULAY'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND—OPINIONS OF, AND ANECDOTES CONNECTED WITH IT.

HISTORY OF ENGLAND.—EDINBURGH REVIEWER'S CRITIQUE.—ATTRACTIONS OF HIS STYLE.—JACOBITISM FASHIONABLE.—“FRASER'S” CRITIQUE.—LORD JEFFREY'S OPINIONS.—THE “CLERGY” AND THE “COUNTRY GENTLEMEN.”—ALISON'S ANSWER.—MACAULAY'S “NEW ZEALANDER.”—MACAULAY AT A VILLAGE INN.—LORD JEFFREY CORRECTING PROOFS.

MACAULAY'S “History of England,” or rather, of the Revolution of 1688 and subsequent years, may be characterised as one of the most gorgeous narratives in the English language. “All the learning scattered amongst diaries, published and unpublished, to the discovery of which the taste of late years has tended, may be found assembled there in a light peculiarly his own. The filling in of the History is an incredible specimen of political eloquence; and the universality of the search which he made for materials is instanced by the array, as well as the character, of the books and tracts which he quotes.” The one fault of this great

work is its Whiggism. It has been said that, as an indictment against the party which opposed the Whigs, it may be considered as the greatest thesis which has ever been written. On the history of the period which it embraces, Sir Archibald Alison, having the highest opinion of the work, was compelled to acknowledge that it was *one-sided*. This party leaning has occasionally led the author into error—not so much of fact as of colouring. The character of the good and benevolent Penn, for instance, is as much darkened as the name and fame of William of Orange is improperly heightened. But these blemishes are few and trivial, compared with the beauties and excellences with which the work abounds. As the *Edinburgh Review* (a partial critic, it is true, but in the present instance, I believe, perfectly sincere) remarked at the time of the publication of the first two volumes;—“ Macaulay is the first who has succeeded in giving to the realities of history (which is generally supposed to demand and require a certain grave austerity of style) the lightness, variety, and attraction of a work designed only to amuse. All historians we have ever

read—not excepting Gibbon and Hume, and including all others in our language—are open to this remark. To read them is a study, an effort of the intellect—well repaid indeed by the result, but still necessarily intent and laborious. Macaulay has, with an instinctive sense both of truth and of the power to realize it, perceived that a true story may be, and should be, as agreeably told as a fictitious one; that the incidents of real life, whether political or domestic, admit of being so arranged as, without detriment to accuracy, to command all the interest of an artificial series of facts; that the chain of circumstances which constitute history may be as finely and gracefully woven as in any tale of fancy, and be as much more interesting as the human countenance, with all its gloomy reality of life, and structure—and breathing beauty, excels the most enchanting portrait that ever passed from the pencil of Kneller or of Lawrence.”*

Macaulay is the first historian who has told with truth and effect the main story of these im-

* *Edinburgh Review*, vol. xc., p. 251.

portant times—the real cause of the downfall of the Stuarts. As stated, it had so long been fashionable to profess a moderate Jacobitism, and so unfashionable to find any virtue in the heroes of the Cromwell party, that contempt for the Puritans, and reverence for the Royal Martyr, had become “topics of faith almost as essential in orthodox education as the Creed or the Church Catechism. By many a fireside hearth, which the expulsion of that cherished royal race had alone rendered secure and smiling, the comfortable dowager, or the rustic squire, or the bright young daughters of the land, still lamented over the sins of the Roundheads, and the misfortunes of Prince Charlie, and sighed that the day had never come when ‘the king should have his own again!—forgetting that in the peace, and purity, and freedom of their happy homes, they were tasting unconsciously, day by day, the fruits of that great deliverance.”*

The reviewer in *Fraser*, although taking a different view from the author on several points

in the History, was compelled to acknowledge that “Of such a book, regarded as a work of art, no off-hand judgment is of much value. The only sure test is the *decies repetitio* ; and the extraordinary fascination which has been the effect of a single perusal, makes us more than commonly doubtful of our present capacity for the forming of a correct decision. The rapid style swept us onward with the force of a torrent: from the commencement to the end of two stout volumes there was no halt. As we turned the last page, we were surprised and grieved to find ourselves at the journey's end. Borne onward by the rushing stream of narrative, we gave ourselves up to the pleasure of indulging in unhesitating admiration of the many brilliant scenes past which we were hurried. Picture after picture came and went in quick succession, all brilliant, all attractive. From the beginning to the end there was no repose; and we begin to suspect, that when we are able, in a calmer mood, to view the whole picture together, the constant and dazzling light will appear excessive, and we shall need what a more perfect art would have supplied, intervals of rest—rest,

which a more sedate and quiet narrative would, from time to time, have afforded. The illustration here taken from the sister art of painting we believe accurate, and, for the moment, useful, because it gives our criticism a sort of palpable existence, and will enable others at once to decide whether their feelings have been the same as our own.”*

Lord Jeffrey's private opinion of the work may be learnt from the following extract from a friendly letter to Mrs. Empsen, in 1848:—

“ I think it not only good, but admirable. It is as fluent and as much coloured as Livy; as close and coherent as Thucydides; with far more real condensation, and a larger thoughtfulness, than either; and quite free from the affected laconisms, and sarcasms, and epigrams of Tacitus. I do not know that I ever read anything so good as the first forty pages; so clear, comprehensive, and concise, so pregnant with deep thought, so suggestive of great views, and grand and memorable distinctions.”†

* *Fraser's Magazine*, vol. xxxix., p. 16.

† Cockburn's Life and Correspondence of Lord Jeffrey, 2 vols. 8vo.

But the reader, I imagine, will have tired of this continual praise, notwithstanding it is so justly due, and will ask, "But how about the 'Clergy at the Restoration,' and the 'Country Gentlemen,' whom Macaulay is said to have handled so roughly?" Sir Archibald Alison, in his excellent review, fully acknowledging the great merits of the History, but objecting here and there to certain conclusions, shall answer these questions:—

"He (Macaulay) tells us that the country gentlemen before the Revolution were mere ignorant country bumpkins, few of whom could read or write, and who, when for once in their lives, came up to London, went staring about on Holborn, or Ludgate-hill, till a spout of water from some impending roof fell into their mouths, while a thief was fumbling in their pockets, or a painted denizen from some of the neighbouring purlieus decoyed them into her bower. Be it so. It was these country bumpkins who gained the battles of Cressy, Poitiers, Agincourt, and Flodden; they built York Cathedral and St. Paul's; their sons gained the victories of Sluys and La Hogue, of Ramilles and Blenheim; they were ennobled by the devotion

and sufferings of the Cavaliers. We hope their well-fed, long-lived, and luxurious descendants would rise from their beds of down to do the same. He tells us the clergy of the age of Charles II. were almost all drawn from the very humblest classes; that their education was very imperfect; that they occupied so low a place in society that no ladies' maid who had hopes of a steward would look at them; and that they were often glad to take up with a damsel whose character had been blown upon by the young squire. Be it so. That age produced the Clarkes and the Cudworths, the Barrows and the Tillotsons, the Taylors and the Newtons, the Halls and the Hookers, of the Church of England, and their efforts stemmed the torrent of licentiousness which, in reaction against the cant of the Covenanters, deluged the country on the accession of Charles II."

Alison's answers are short and curt, but they endorse the sentiments of most critics upon these points. The reader who wishes to see a good supplemental account of "the country squire on a visit to London," cannot do better than consult Dick Steele's graphic picture in the *Spectator*, No. 354.

Moore, as early as June 29, 1839, wished that Macaulay would apply himself to "a great work." Under that date, in his Diary, he has written:— "Went to breakfast with Lord John Russell, and praised Macaulay's late articles in the *Edinburgh*, and agreed with me in lamenting that his great powers should not be concentrated upon *one* great work, instead of being scattered thus in *Sybil's leaves*; .inspired, indeed, but still only leaves."*

Macaulay's "New Zealander," who, "in the midst of a vast solitude," is, at some distant period of England's decline, to "take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge, to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's," it appears is a very ancient personage—much older, indeed, than is generally imagined. He was alluded to by Horace Walpole, in a letter to be found in his Correspondence.

A great number of very curious and interesting articles, illustrative or explanatory of Macaulay's "History of England," are to be found in that most useful repertory, *Notes and Queries*, vols. i. and ii., Second Series.

* Moore's Life and Correspondence, edited by Lord John Russell, 8 vols. 8vo.

One great secret of the vivid character of Macaulay's descriptions was the zeal with which he visited and made inquiries in the localities where many of the events took place which he recorded in his History. At Weston Zoyland, a village in Somersetshire, about four miles from Bridgewater—celebrated as being the scene of the Duke of Monmouth's defeat at the battle of Sedgemoor—the Historian is well known. He resided at an humble inn in the village for some weeks, occupying his time with minute investigations in the neighbourhood, and writing that portion of his narrative while the facts and impressions were fresh on his mind, in a little room which is still shown there to the rare visitors to the locality.

Lord Cockburn states, with reference to that admirable critic, Lord Jeffrey, that there was no one of the friends of his later acquisition for whom he had greater admiration or regard than Macaulay; and he testified the interest which he took in this great writer's fame by a proceeding, which, considering his age and position, is not unworthy of being told. This Judge of seventy-four revised the proof-sheets of the two first volumes of

the “History of England,” with the diligence and minute care of a corrector of the press toiling for bread;—not merely suggesting changes in the matter and the expression, but attending to the very commas and colons—a task which, though humble, could not be useless, because it was one at which long practice had made him very skilful. Indeed, he used to boast that it was one of his peculiar excellences. On returning a proof to an editor of the *Review*, he says, “I have myself rectified most of the errors, and made many valuable verbal improvements in a small way. But my great task has been with the punctuation, on which I have, as usual, acquitted myself to admiration. And, indeed, this is the department of literature on which I feel that I most excel, and on which I am, therefore, most willing now to stake my reputation.”

Within six months of the publication of the “History of England,” it ran through five editions, involving an issue of above 18,000 copies; and, on the other side of the Atlantic, our enterprising and economical brothers reproduced it in forms which appear infinite in number, and infinitesimal

in price. Three editions of the last two volumes of Macaulay's "History of England" were published in Philadelphia by different booksellers. One of them, of 25,000 copies, was set up, stereotyped, printed, and bound in the space of fifty hours.

25,000 copies of Macaulay's "History of England," vols. iii. and iv., were printed as a first edition. It was soon found, however, even before the day of publication, that the demand would be far greater than the liberal supply provided, and the press of Messrs. Clowes was immediately set going for a second impression. Many will be surprised to learn that the weight of the first impression, mainly delivered to the trade over Messrs. Longman's counter in one day, was no less than fifty-six tons! Surely this fact is unparalleled in the history of publishing.

Rumour states that vols. v. and vi. are in such a state of forwardness that they will be issued during the next season—in November or December, it is believed.

Besides a close attendance upon his History, Macaulay has written very lately two excellent memoirs on Oliver Goldsmith and William Pitt, for the new edition of the “Encyclopædia Britannica.”

The Messrs. Longman, the eminent publishers, are said to have paid Macaulay the revenues of a prince. We have heard, says the *Athenæum*, on the best authority, of one single cheque for twenty thousand pounds !

ANECDOTES AND SAYINGS OF LORD MACAULAY.

Extraordinary Powers of Conversation.—As a table-talker Macaulay had a reputation most peculiar. He was not witty, remarks an eminent critic, like Jerrold, nor humourous like Sydney Smith, nor poetical like Tom Moore, nor dreamy like Coleridge. He was narrative. He was the troubadour of dining-rooms, who charmed the company with noble speech while they cracked

the nuts and passed the wine. His conversation, a lady remarked, "was like his essays and his lays — all print." In society he was continually meeting Smith and Jeffrey, who record in their interesting letters many little anecdotes illustrative of his peculiar gift. Moore went to Bowood one day to dine with the Marquis of Lansdowne. There were many notables there, including Macaulay. Moore says:—"The dinner and evening very agreeable; Macaulay, wonderful. Never, perhaps, was there combined so much talent with so marvellous a memory. To attempt to record his conversation one must be as wonderfully gifted with memory as himself."

Flashes of Silence.—Sydney Smith one day, after Macaulay's return from the East, remarked to a friend who had been speaking of the distinguished talker,—"Yes, I agree; he is certainly more agreeable since his return from India. His enemies might perhaps have said before (though I never did so) that he talked rather too much; but now he has occasional flashes of silence that make his conversation perfectly delightful."

Three Celebrated Talkers.—At the dinner-table it was found that it did not answer very well to invite Macaulay with Jeffrey and Sydney Smith. Jeffrey could sit silent for a moderate time with serenity. Sydney Smith could not without annoyance. Both had had three years of full liberty (for they did not interfere with each other) during Macaulay's absence; but he eclipsed them both upon his return.

The Trappist.—“What a talker that Frenchman Buchon is!” remarked Sydney Smith. “Macaulay is a Trappist compared to him.”

Macaulay and Milman.—Mrs. Beecher Stowe thus speaks of Macaulay, having met him at his sister's (Lady Trevelyan) breakfast table:—“Macaulay is celebrated as a conversationalist, and, like Coleridge, Carlyle, and almost every one who enjoys this reputation, he has sometimes been accused of not allowing people their fair share in conversation. This might prove an objection possibly to those who wish to talk; but, as I greatly prefer to hear, it would prove none

to me. I must say, however, that on this occasion the matter was quite equitably managed. There were, I should think, some twenty or thirty at the breakfast table, and the conversation formed itself into little eddies of two or three around the table, now and then welling out into a great bay of general discourse. I was seated between Macaulay and Milman, and must confess I was a little embarrassed at times, because I wanted to hear what they were both saying at the same time. However, by the use of the faculty by which you play a piano with both hands, I got on very comfortably."

Out-talked. — Macaulay's friends, especially Smith and Jeffrey, often joked in a quiet way about his "gift." The latter wrote to a friend once about his having dined with some fashionable people, when " — burst in, in a state of frenzy of high spirits, and roared and rattled in a way that was almost frightful, till he drove Macaulay and other quiet people away."

Macaulay and Sydney Smith. — Some one spoke

to Sydney Smith about Macaulay and their well-known powers of conversation. "Oh, yes! we both talk a great deal; but I don't believe Macaulay ever did hear my voice," he exclaimed, laughing. "Sometimes, when I have told a good story, I have thought to myself, 'Poor Macaulay! he will be very sorry, some day, to have missed hearing that.'"

Macaulay's Taste for Midnight Rambling.—Macaulay had a singular taste for walking through the deserted streets of the great metropolis in the dead of the night. When the citizens were fast asleep, and all was hushed, those were the hours, he used to remark, for reflection and thought—when that utter loneliness which is peculiar at midnight to great cities, steals over the meditating wayfarer, solitary apparently and alone in the world. Dr. Johnson possessed a similar taste; and Charles Dickens is singularly fond of the old city streets and alleys when they are emptied of the busy throng that fill them in the day time. Lord Jeffrey, once writing to him, remarked, "How funny that *besoin* of yours for midnight rambling

in city streets, and how curious that Macaulay should have the same taste or fancy. If I thought there was any such inspiration as yours to be caught by the practice, I should expose my poor irritable *trachea*, I think, to a nocturnal pilgrimage without scruple. But, I fear I should have my venture for my pains."

Goethe and Schiller.—Moore relates that, dining at Lansdowne House one day, in company with Lords Clarendon and Clanricarde, Fortescue, and other celebrities, he "sat between Macaulay and Rogers. Of Macaulay's range of knowledge anything may be believed, so wonderful is his memory. His view of Goethe, as being totally devoid of the moral sense as well as of real feeling; his characters, therefore, mere abstractions, having nothing of the man in them, and, in this respect, so unlike Schiller's. Such, at least, as far as I could collect it, was his view of Goethe."

Fondness for Street Ballads.—Macaulay was always an admirer of old ballads. In 1833, upon Mr. Stanley (now Lord Derby) speaking in favour

of a Bill for the Suppression of Disturbances in Ireland, and quoting some passages from ballads sung in the streets of Kilkenny, in proof of the violence and brutality of the disposition of the people, Macaulay said—“ He did not rest on the anecdotes which he had heard on the subject. He did not take his proof from the ballads on which the honourable gentleman had commented. From circumstances such as these, trifling as they might at first appear, the signs of the times might often be collected. Such things were, as Lord Bacon said, like straws, which thrown up showed which way the wind blew.”

Macaulay's Childhood.—From his birth, it is said, “ He exhibited signs of superiority and genius, and more especially of that power of memory which startled everyone by its quickness, flexibility, and range. While he was yet a boy, he was in incessant request to ‘ tell books’ to his playmates. At that early date he would repeat and declaim the longest ‘ Arabian Night,’ as fluently as Scheherazade herself. A little later, he would

recite one of Scott's novels—story, characters, scenery—almost as well as though the book were in his hand. But these were stolen and profane pleasures, not encouraged, indeed barely tolerated, in the strict conventional house. The household books were the Bible, the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and a few Cameronian divines. An eager and dramatic appetite found food for fancy in the allegories of Scripture, and even in the dry sectarian literature of Scottish controversy. He himself used to tell a funny story of a nursery scene. For every one who came to his father's house, he had a Biblical nickname:—*Moses*, *Holofernes*, *Melchisedek*, and the like. One visitor he called *The Beast*. Kind mamma, prudent papa, frowned at their precocious child, and set their brows against this offensive name; but Thomas stuck to his point. Next time *The Beast* made a morning call, the boy ran to the window which hung over the street—to turn back laughing, crowing with excitement and delight. 'Look here, mother,' cries the child, 'you see I am right. Look, look at *the number of the Beast!*' Mrs. Macaulay glanced at the hackney-

coach; and, behold, its number was 666!"—*Athenæum.*

The Boys and the Ballad Singer.—It is related that Macaulay, passing one day through the Seven Dials, bought a handful of ballads from some street folk who were bawling out their contents to a gaping audience. Proceeding on his way home, he was astonished, on suddenly stopping, to find himself surrounded by half a score of urchins, their faces beaming with expectation. "Now, then," said the Historian, "what is it?" "Oh! *that* is a good un," replied the boys, "after we've a come all this way." "But what are you waiting for?" said Macaulay, astonished at the lads' familiarity. "Waiting for?—why, *to hear you sing* to be sure!"

Old Irish Slang Ballads.—Tom Moore relates that, breakfasting one morning with Monckton Milnes, to meet Hallam and Macaulay, the latter opened quite a new character of his marvellous memory, astonishing as much as amusing them, which was no other than his acquaintance with the old Irish slang ballads, such as "The night before

Larry was stretched." &c., &c., many of which he repeated as glibly off as Moore could in his boyhood. "He certainly obeys most wonderfully Eloisa's injunction, 'Do all things but *forget*,'" said Moore.

Anecdote of Leopold.—Macaulay, from his vast knowledge of every subject, was ready in anecdote as well as apt illustration. In replying to Mr. Hunt, who had spoken against Warburton's Anatomy Bill (February, 1832), Macaulay said— "Does the hon. gentleman know from what cruel sufferings the improvement of surgical science has rescued our species? I will tell him one story, the first that comes to hand. He may have heard of Leopold, Duke of Austria, the same who imprisoned our Richard Cœur-de-Lion. Leopold's horse fell under him, and crushed his leg. The surgeons said that the limb must be amputated; but none of them knew how to amputate it. Leopold, in his agony, laid a hatchet on his thigh, and ordered his servant to strike with a mallet. The leg was cut off, and he died of the gush of blood. Such was the end of that powerful prince. Why, there is not now a bricklayer who falls

from a ladder in England who cannot obtain surgical assistance infinitely superior to that which the Sovereign of Austria could command in the twelfth century!"

Americans and Sham Macaulays.—“I have heard that one of the American ministers in this country was so oppressed by the numbers of his countrymen applying for introductions, that he was obliged at last to set up sham Sydney Smiths and false Macaulays. But they can't have been good counterfeits: for a most respectable American, on his return home, was heard describing Sydney Smith as a thin, grave, dull, old fellow; and as to Macaulay (said he) I never met a more silent man in all my life!”—*Sydney Smith.*

Cathedrals Built by Freemasons.—Mrs. B. Stowe was in company with Milman and Macaulay once. “Milman,” remarks Mrs. S. to her daughter, “was for many years Dean of Westminster, and kindly offered me his services to indoctrinate me into its antiquities. Macaulay made some suggestive remarks on cathedrals generally. I said that I

thought it singular that we so seldom know who were the architects that designed these great buildings ; that they appeared to me the most sublime efforts of human genius. He said that all the cathedrals of Europe were undoubtedly the result of one or two minds ; that they rose into existence very nearly contemporaneously, and were built by travelling companies of masons, under the direction of some systematic organisation. Perhaps you knew all this before, but I did not ; and so it struck me as a glorious idea. And if it is not the true account of the origin of cathedrals, it certainly ought to be ; and, as our old grandmother used to say, ‘ I’m going to believe it.’ ”

Partiality to Sydney Smith.—Mrs. Stowe had been talking to Macaulay about Shakespeare, “ but somehow or other, we found ourselves next talking about Sydney Smith ; and it was very pleasant to me, recalling the evenings when your father (Professor Stowe) has read, and we have laughed over him, to hear him spoken of as a living existence by one who had known him.

Still, I have always had a quarrel with Sydney, for the wicked use to which he put his wit, in abusing good old Dr. Carey, and the missionaries in India; nay, in some places he even stooped to be spiteful and vulgar. I could not help, therefore, saying, when Macaulay, observed that he had the most agreeable wit of any literary man of his acquaintance, ‘Well, it was very agreeable, but it could not have been very agreeable to the people who came under the edge of it,’ and instanced his treatment of Dr. Carey. Some others who were present seemed to feel warmly on this subject too; and Macaulay said, ‘Ah, well, Sydney repented of that afterwards.’ He seemed to cling to his memory, and to turn from every fault to his joviality, as a thing he could not enough delight to remember. Truly, wit, like charity, covers a multitude of sins. A man who has the faculty of raising a laugh in this sad, earnest world, is remembered with indulgence and complacency always.”

Ticknor's History of Spanish Literature.—“It is not the least gratifying tribute to Mr. Ticknor's

valuable work that it was recommended for perusal by Mr. (Lord) Macaulay to the Queen of England."—*Miss Mitford's Recollections.*

Macaulay's Retentive Memory.—Mrs. Beecher Stowe, speaking of being in company with Macaulay, remarks:—"I was informed that he is famous for a most uncommon memory; one of those men to whom it seems impossible to forget anything once read, and he has read all sorts of things that can be thought of, in all languages. A gentleman told me that he could repeat all the old Newgate literature, hanging ballads, last speeches, and dying confessions; while his knowledge of Milton is so accurate, that if his poems were blotted out of existence, they might be restored simply from his memory. This same accurate knowledge extends to the Latin and Greek classics, and to much of the literature of modern Europe. Had nature been required to make a man to order for a perfect historian, nothing better could have been put together, especially since there is enough of the poetic fire included in the composition to fuse all these multiplied

materials together, and colour the historical crystallisation with them."

Mackintosh's Memory.—What Macaulay once said of his friend Mackintosh was peculiarly applicable to himself:—“ His memory was like a vast warehouse, divided into regular compartments. Each portion of knowledge as received was placed in its proper parcel, which, when required for immediate use, was taken down, untied, used, then carefully replaced, and appropriated to its proper shelf. No confusion; everything neat and in order.”

Macaulay and Magliabechi.—Several anecdotes are told of Macaulay's extraordinary memory, and remarkable industry in reading. One of them, I remember, drew a parallel betwixt his powers and those of Magliabechi, and Isaac Reed the literary cormorant of Staples Inn.

High Character.—It was either Lord Holland or Sydney Smith who, in answer to a question as to Macaulay's honesty of purpose, said: — “ I

believe him to be incorruptible. You might lay ribbons, stars, wealth, titles, before him in vain. He has an honest, genuine love of his country, and the world could not bribe him to neglect her interests."

Book-stalls.—Macaulay was fond of rummaging book-stalls; and scarcely a dusty old book-shop in any bye court or out of the way corner in London escaped his attention. The writer of this volume has seen him frequently, years ago, mount a ladder and scour the top shelf for quarto pamphlets, or curious literary relics of a bygone age, and come down after an hour's examination covered with dust and cobwebs. He was not very communicative to booksellers; and when any of them would hold up a book, although at the other end of the shop, he could tell from the cover, or by intuition, what it was all about, and would say "no!", or "I have it already," before the dealer could even ask whether he would look at it. After he had purchased a book or volume of old pamphlets, he was impatient to have it at home, and would frequently tuck a stout, shabby old folio,

a couple of centuries old, under his arm, and act as his own porter. Many eminent book-worms delighting in the company of old books, are not above carrying one through a fashionable thoroughfare even in the height of the season. Gladstone has often been seen with a huge tome under his arm (a vellum "Homer," perchance) threading his way from a book-stall. Bulwer used to have quite a fancy for these primitive book-marts, and tells us, in one of his novels, of picking up the "Horace" with the notes of the forty commentators—a perfect treasure, and at the cost of only a few shillings. Southey had quite a mania for book-stalls, and could not pass one without "just running his eye over for *one* minute," even if the coach which was to take him to see Coleridge at Hampstead was within that time of starting. There are various kinds of excitement. Looking over old book-stalls, with a chance of buying for a couple of shillings, or, perhaps a few pence only, a book worth several pounds, is to the student the most delightful of them all.

Fame the Result of New Words.—Macaulay

breakfasted occasionally at Rogers's. Talking one morning of Pascal's "Lettres Provinciales," he said it was almost the only book one could never get tired of. He spoke of the proof that is afforded of *fame* by the creation of new words, such as *Quixotic*—which pervades all languages—*Machiavellian*, *Rodomontade* (from Rodomont), &c.

An American Lady's Description of Macaulay.— "Macaulay is about fifty. He has never married, yet there are unmistakeable evidences in the breathings and aspects of the family circle by whom he was surrounded, that the social part is not wanting in his conformation. Some very charming young lady relatives seemed to think quite as much of their gifted uncle as you might have done had he been yours. Macaulay's whole physique gives you the impression of great strength and stamina of constitution. He has the kind of frame which we usually imagine is peculiarly English—short, stout, and firmly knit. There is something hearty in all his demonstrations. He speaks in that full, round, rolling voice, deep from the chest, which we also conceive

of as being more common in England than America. As to his conversation, it is just like his writing, that is to say, it shows very strongly the same qualities of mind."—*Sunny Memories*.

Greatness Prophesied.—Some one was speaking of Macaulay's great powers when a young man, and Smith replied, "Yes, I take great credit to myself; I always prophesied his greatness from the first moment I saw him, then a very young and unknown man, on the northern circuit. There are no limits to his knowledge, on small subjects as well as great; he is like a book in breeches."

Portraits of Macaulay.—"I had met Macaulay before, but as you have not, you will of course ask a lady's first question, 'How does he look?' Well, so far as relates to the mere outward husk of the soul, our engravers and daguerreotypists have done their work as well as they usually do. The engraving that you get in the best editions of his works may be considered, I suppose, a fair representation of how he looks when he sits to have his picture taken, which is generally very

different from the way any body looks at any other time. People seem to forget in taking likenesses, that the features of the face are nothing but an alphabet, and that a dry, dead map of a person's face gives no more idea how one looks than the simple representation of an alphabet shows what there is in a poem."—*Mrs. Beecher.*

Popularity.—Sydney Smith once said to a lady—"You must study Macaulay when you come to town. He is incomparably the first lion in the metropolis; that is, he writes, talks, and speaks better than any man in England."

Mrs. Stowe and Macaulay on Shakespeare.—[Mrs. S. was at a breakfast-table with Macaulay.] "The conversation now went on to Milton and Shakespeare. Macaulay made one remark that gentlemen are always making, and that is, that there is very little characteristic difference between Shakespeare's women. Well, there is no hope for that matter; so long as men are not women they will think so. In general they lump together Miranda, Juliet, Desdemona, and Viola."

Macaulay and the Quarterly Review.—We remember, when a boy, meeting Tom Hill when Macaulay was in the first flush of his reputation. Tom Hill was the butt of Theodore Hook—the Paul Pry of Mr. Poole. Tom knew a good deal. “My young friend,” said Tommy, “I happen to know this, that John Murray would give the copyright of ‘Childe Harold’ to Macaulay of Trinity, for old Zachary’s son to quit the *Edinburgh Review* and write for the *Quarterly*.” Macaulay, however, was true to his first friend, Lord Lansdowne, and to his first love, Jeffrey and his *Review*.—*Table Talker in Illust. Lond. News.*

Bores and Breakfast Parties.—The authoress of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” was breakfasting at a lady’s house, when “Looking around the table, and seeing how everybody seemed to be enjoying themselves, I said to Macaulay, that these breakfast parties were a novelty to me ; that we never had them in America ; but I thought them the most delightful form of social life. He seized upon the idea, as he often does, and turned it playfully inside out, and shook it on all sides, just

as one might play with the lustres of a chandelier — to see them glisten. He expatiated on the merits of breakfast parties, as compared with all other parties. He said dinner parties are mere formalities. You invite a man to dinner because you *must* invite him: because you are acquainted with his grandfather, or it is proper you should: but you invite a man to breakfast because you want to see *him*. You may be sure, if you are invited to breakfast, there is something agreeable about you. This idea struck me as very sensible; and we all generally, having the fact before our eyes that *we* were invited to breakfast, approved the sentiment. ‘Yes,’ said Macaulay, ‘depend upon it, if a man is a bore he never gets an invitation to breakfast.’ ‘Rather hard on the poor bores,’ said a lady. ‘Particularly,’ said Macaulay, laughing; ‘as bores are usually the most irreproachable of human beings. Did you ever hear a bore complained of when they did not say that he was the best fellow in the world? For my part, if I wanted to get a guardian for a family of defenceless orphans, I should inquire for the greatest bore

in the vicinity. I should know that he would be a man of unblemished honour and integrity.’’

To take Macaulay out of literature and society, and put him in the House of Commons, is like taking the chief physician out of London during a pestilence.—*Sydney Smith.*

The Aristocracy and the Middle Classes.—Macaulay characterised the Reform Bill agitation of 1831-2 as “ the struggle which the middle classes in England are maintaining against an aristocracy of mere locality—against an aristocracy the principle of which is to invest a hundred drunken pot-wallopers in one place, or the owner of a ruined hovel in another, with powers which are withheld from cities renowned to the furthest ends of the earth for the marvels of their wealth and of their industry.”

Lord Melbourne once said of him,—“ I wish,” remarked the Prime Minister, “ that I was as sure of any one thing, as Tom Macaulay is sure of everything.”

Power of the Jews.—Sir Robert Inglis objected to allow the Jews any civil or political power, although they might possess themselves of as much money as they chose. Macaulay replied:—“The only power that my hon. friend seems to wish to deprive the Jews of, is to consist in maces, gold chains, and skins of parchment with pieces of wax dangling at the ends of them. But he is leaving them all the things that bestow real power. He allows them to have property; and in these times property is power, mighty and overwhelming power; he allows them to have knowledge, and knowledge is no less power.”

Monopoly—“The effect of monopoly generally is to make articles scarce, and to make them dear, and make them bad.”

Authors and their Patrons.—In allusion to the old system of writing for hire, and dedicating books to rich persons, Macaulay remarked:—“I can conceive no system more fatal to the integrity and independence of literary men, than one under which they should be taught to look for their

daily bread to the favour of ministers and nobles. I can conceive no system more certain to turn those minds, which are formed by nature to be the blessings and ornaments of our species, into its scandal and its pest."

Manuscript of the "History of England."—The Head Master of the Berwick Grammar School, speaking of visiting Macaulay at his residence, described the MS. of the "History" as it lay on his study table as "official foolscap paper, tied at the corner with red tape, and written in lines full an inch apart."

Soliloquising.—Jeffrey used to tell a story about dining at Stephens' with Macaulay and Mount-eagle, and how Macaulay exceeded his ordinary excess in talk, until he could scarcely be kept from pure soliloquy, and how Lord M. fell fairly asleep, and the Platonic host himself *nodded* his applause.

Lays of Ancient Rome.—It has been said, that for these delightful and soul-stirring productions

we are indebted to the circumstance of Macaulay's meeting in Whitechapel some ballad singers, and observing the simplicity and force of their verses, the thought struck him that the martial stories of ancient Rome might well be told in the same balladian manner. The result was the above popular work.

Macaulay at 39.—“His personal appearance is prepossessing. In stature he is about the middle size, and well formed. His eyes are of a deep blue, and have a very intelligent expression. His complexion is dark, and his hair of a beautiful jet black. His face is rather inclined to the oval form. His features are small and regular. He is now in the thirty-ninth year of his age.”—*Grant's Recollections.*

The Duke of Wellington.—It was said, at the time of the Duke of Wellington's decease at Walmer, that the eloquently written life of the great General that appeared in the *Times* on the following day, was from the pen of Macaulay. It was written and kept in one of the pigeon-holes of the

editor's room for nearly two years before being required.

Legal Power of the Jews.—Macaulay always objected to the persecution of the Jews. In reply to the assertion that they had no legal right to political power, he said:—“As to the matter of right, if the word ‘legal’ is to be attached to it I am bound to acknowledge that the Jews have no legal right to power; but in the same way, three hundred years ago they had no legal right to be in England; and six hundred years ago they had no right to the teeth in their heads. But if it is the moral right we are to look at, I say that on every principle of moral obligation I hold that the Jew has a right to political power. Every man has a right to all that may conduce to his pleasure, if he does not inflict pain on any one else.”

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